University of Alberta

Augustan Ecology:

Environmental Attitudes in Eighteenth-Century Poetry

by

Richard Pickard ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of English

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 1998

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Abstract

The new field of ecological literary criticism has focussed on British Romanticism (especially poetry), nineteenth-century American prose, and twentieth-century literature. This criticism rarely addresses eighteenth-century and earlier literature, and in this dissertation I attempt to redress this imbalance by developing and practicing an ecocriticism informed by Augustan ideas about the relation between humans and the more-than-human world.

After an introduction to the seventeenth century (especially Paradise Lost and Evelyn's Silva), I discuss attitudes to nature expressed in several prominent georgics: John Philips's Cyder, Pope's Windsor-Forest, Anne Irwin's Castle-Howard, Thomson's Seasons, Dodsley's Agriculture, and Mason's English Garden. I move on to non-georgic poems that protest improper land use: Pope's "Epistle to Burlington"; Anna Seward's "The Lake"; Cavendish's "Dialogue betweene an Oake, and a Man"; Finch's "Upon My Lord Winchilsea's Converting the Mount"; Elizabeth Carter's "To Dr. Walwyn"; and Leapor's "Crumble-Hall." I conclude by suggesting what Augustan ecology might look like in critical practice.

Augustan ecology expresses a fundamental responsibility to nature, to maintain nature for its own sake as well as for that of humanity's place within it. The answer of Augustan ecological poets to environmental crisis is deceptively simple: nature in all its forms must be treated with respect, or both humanity and nature will suffer degradation and eventually destruction. Effective use, such as the georgics recommend, must consider both present and future needs of both humans and nature. Sensitivity to nature, such as these non-georgic poems recommend, requires consideration toward the world beyond the self. These poets knew and feared that

immediate use can overwhelm long-term responsibility. Augustan ecology refuses to allow use to displace responsibility from human relations with nature.

The poets discussed here share a basic concern about the effect of human labour on the natural world; the fate of nature as it comes under humanity's increasing dominion; and the role of literature in articulating the relationship between humanity and nature. These ecological poets raise their voices out of silence for a common goal, independently felt, that continues to provoke our thoughts and fears.

Acknowledgements

My debts for this project are numerous and large, but I need first to thank the friends and family who've been putting up with my obsessions for years, especially Pippa Brush, Maureen King, Kent Lewis, Calvin Symes, and my parents John and Aileen Pickard.

Help has come from various people, including Gordon Fulton and Henry Summerfield, my professors at the University of Victoria; Felicity Nussbaum, who at my first conference encouraged me to think about doing a PhD; Rebecca Solnit, who discussed the perils of environmentalism and neoromanticism with me via e-mail; and Valerie Johnson and Diane Kelsey McColley, whose conversation at a conference on the environment in Reno inspired me through the last round of major revisions.

Members of the University of Alberta's English department have been consistently supportive, especially Katherine Binhammer and committee members Stephen Reimer and Greg Hollingshead. Isobel Grundy, my supervisor, would have been immensely helpful even if she had only shared her passion for literature and her interest in nature; there are no words to describe what I owe to her thoughtful readings.

I am deeply indebted to fellow grad student Rachel Bennett, who has encouraged me since we met on our first day at the University of Alberta, both of us chagrined that we were both hoping to work with Isobel Grundy in the eighteenth century. Rachel has kept me honest and committed with her careful thinking about the meaning of literature and of academic life.

Finally, I am eternally grateful to my wife Nancy Pekter for her patience, her thorough criticism, and her unflagging support every step of the way. Nancy, I can come back to life now.

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Introduction

Literature and the Environment

> Pray, pray spare them! I should be happy if my pleadings might avail for the preservation of all the fine trees now bearing the fatal warrants; that it might, ere too late, be considered how dangerous it is to alter what cannot be restored, and what is already at once useful and lovely.
>
> (Anna Seward, October 3, 1801)[1]

The academic field of ecological literary criticism, or ecocriticism, has been coming of age rapidly over the last eight or so years. Two entirely separate movements have led this development: one which concentrates on twentieth-century North American literature and emphasizes environmental activism, well represented by the 1998 North American Interdisciplinary Conference on Environment and Community (NAICEC); and one which concentrates on English Romantic literature and argues heatedly about the state of the academy, organized loosely around and in response to Jonathan Bate's Romantic Ecology.

These two primary forms of ecocriticism, in spite of their differences, share a common emphasis on Romantic conceptions of nature, and I argue in this dissertation that such attitudes do not afford the only path to an ecologically responsible relationship with the land. As activist Rebecca Solnit remarked during a 1998 NAICEC session on "Advocacy versus Neutrality," "[t]he environmental movement's values come from the European romantic tradition. Wordsworth begat the backpacking industry and most of us. I believe it's an honourable tradition—but it is a tradition, which is to say we have to be careful how we universalize." Referring to the influence that Aldo Leopold's essay "Thinking Like a Mountain" has had on subsequent

environmental writing, Solnit went on to comment that far too many of the writers who have "managed to interrogate mountains" discover that the mountains sound suspiciously like "Rousseau and Thoreau and Wordsworth." I share her belief that this form of environmentalism is far too limited, but also that environmentalism is a valuable tradition. Challenging neoromantic attitudes, or trying to imagine their absence, signifies not a rejection of environmentalism but an attempt to imagine a different and perhaps more productive version of it.

The Romantic version of ecocriticism reached one of its many dubious high points at a special session of the 1992 MLA conference, entitled "Green Romanticism: The Environment and the Imagination." The session featured papers by Marjorie Levinson, Jonathan Bate, and Stuart Peterfreund, and included Karl Kroeber as respondent. Peterfreund summarized the event in a review two years later of Bate's Romantic Ecology, which had inspired the session: "I am firmly persuaded that if there had been a window in front of the rostrum, Bate and Kroeber would have exhorted the large and equally conflicted audience to defenestrate Levinson and me" (199).

The North American version reached one of its high points at the North American Interdisciplinary Conference on Environment and Community (NAICEC) hosted by the Center for Environmental Arts and Humanities at the University of Nevada, Reno in February 1998. More than a hundred papers were delivered, by speakers as diverse as philosopher, linguist and magician David Abram; Maria Muzquiz, who owns and operates ranches in both Mexico and Texas; Terry Gifford, Welsh poet, mountain-climber and academic; and Western Shoshone activist Carrie Dann. The ensuing conversations were passionate and committed and above all co-

operative. The North American version is staunchly interdisciplinary, whereas the Romantic version is fiercely self-critical, almost to the point of violence.

Romantic ecocriticism has argued venomously about the state of the discipline at least as much as it has discussed the literature that is its ostensible subject. Karl Kroeber's 1994 Ecological Literary Criticism, for example, contains a chapter about what he calls "Cold War criticism," in which he takes Marxist and historicist critics to task, apparently for not surrendering in 1989 with the Communist Party in eastern Europe and the USSR. Stuart Peterfreund in his review of Romantic Ecology calls Bate "at best sly, at worst hopelessly obtuse," as well as "at best problematic and at worst downright wrong" (200). The discipline has shown signs of increased maturity in the last few years, however, especially in the 1996 special "Green Romanticism" issue of Studies in Romanticism, edited by Bate but exhibiting a markedly increased diversity of approach and sensitivity of discussion. Romantic ecocriticism is finally showing signs of becoming sophisticated enough to accept a multiplicity of approaches and viewpoints, so much so that it is becoming difficult to use a singular noun to refer to it.

An important field that I do not pursue here is that of American Romanticism, exemplified in Lawrence Buell's The Environmental Imagination. Rather than trace isolated references in the scholarly literature, or attempt a comparison of literatures written over a century apart and on opposite sides of the Atlantic, and then relate both (and their relation) to the context in which I write, I do not address this literature here. Buell's interest, for example, is in Thoreau and (in a phrase taken from the subtitle to his book) the formation of American culture; this has little to contribute directly

to the study of eighteenth-century English literature, in spite of a few tantalizing comments. First, Buell notes that "Thoreau's interests were actually planted in the neoclassical era, which one is tempted to contrast too starkly with romanticism as urban in spirit" (57). Second, he remarks on Thoreau's fondness for Virgil (400-01) and the vogue in the United States for Thomson's Seasons (400). Even though these comments are intriguing for a student of environmentalism and Augustan poetry, and even though the debate on the environment has no stable boundaries, I hesitate at bridging too recklessly the gap between literatures as distinct as mid-nineteenth-century American prose and mid-eighteenth-century English poetry.

Indeed, the terms of this debate are notoriously unstable, and I should note that I use the terms "environmental" and "ecological" almost interchangeably in this dissertation. "Environmental" is the word more widely used in popular conversation, but "ecological" appears more frequently in academic circles. Also, "ecological" carries with it associations with the physical science of ecology, whereas "environmental" is associated instead with civil disobedience and mass movements.[2] There is a certain value to using "ecological" because it is a common term in literary criticism, especially of the Romantic period. However, Romantic ecocriticism carefully marks the beginning of the nineteenth century as the originary moment of ecology, based on the development over the next eighty years of modern evolutionary theory, so critics working on earlier literature who use "ecological" must be careful not to weaken their arguments by using someone else's tools for the job. I see most of these as limitations, though not quite fatal flaws. There are good reasons to be suspicious of either term but there are no viable options apart from one or the other of them.

Participants in the environmental debate, no matter what their persuasion, are all talking about the same thing: the problem of how to live in the world without causing or contributing to its destruction. Many Augustan poems about the land, especially the agricultural georgics, are about exactly that. This dissertation is in large part a genre study of the Augustan georgic, but it studies the poems through their expression of a relation to nature, especially as the genre changed through the period. The georgics attempt to negotiate a sustainable relation to the environment and are therefore crucial to the project of this dissertation, to examine Augustan thinking about the land. A major difficulty in reading Augustan georgics now (and a contributing factor to their extreme unpopularity even among scholars of the period) is that we have learned to read about nature through the lens of Romanticism. The environmental movement, like the scholarly discipline of ecocriticism, can learn much from studying texts and ideas of an earlier period than that generally recognized as a time friendly to ecological thinking. Accordingly, this thesis asks what poets of the Augustan period—when poetry had perhaps its widest audience and before the appearance of those Romantic texts so important to contemporary environmentalism—considered to be normal, healthy or unhealthy ways of living with or on the land. Ecocriticism needs to understand what writers (and readers) from that time saw as their relation to the land.

This dissertation is my contribution to the ongoing conversation about the environment, but it neither seeks to determine the likelihood of environmental catastrophe nor envisions solutions for particular material challenges discussed in this conversation. There are a few basic assumptions that guide my work on ecological thinking and writing, some of which have

developed from my reading of eighteenth-century and earlier literature. First, the world is a place that changes, sometimes dramatically, as a result of processes both "natural" and "unnatural" but mostly through a combination of influences. In spite of the inevitability of change, I practice ecological criticism in the conviction that it is both permissible and worthwhile to seek to influence change, and to decide which changes should be slowed or sped up or stopped or begun. Second, I work on eighteenth-century poetry out of a sense that Romanticism might not be the best foundation on which to base ecological thinking, living, or activism.

The literary academy has begun serious work in the field of ecocriticism. William Cronon's Uncommon Ground is an interdisciplinary collection of scholarly essays, written out of a one-semester seminar that the authors spent in collaborative study; another important collection is Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations, edited by Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan. Significant books by individual authors include Adams's The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory, Bate's Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition and Gifford's Green Voices: Understanding Contemporary Nature Poetry. Each work in this vein has its own idiosyncratic relation to any construction of either environmentalism or green theory, but most share an emphasis on Romanticism and Romantic texts as forerunners of current practice.[3] Adams uses Frankenstein as her earliest example of feminist-vegetarian social resistance in a literary work (108-19); Bate sees Romantic poetry, especially Wordsworth's, as the first expression of ecological thought; and Gifford uses the term "postpastoral" as an evaluative term to praise certain contemporary writers for their quasi-Romantic escape from Enlightenment attitudes that he

locates in eighteenth-century poetry. Wordsworth's writing has particular resonance in this context.

Many different things have been argued as causes of the acquisitiveness and arrogance that have allowed humans to take the world so far toward environmental collapse, some more successfully or legitimately so than others: that version of Christian ideas that saw humanity as the lords of creation, divorced from the ethic of humble stewardship within Christian tradition;[4] the Cartesian denial of reason to the non-human world and concomitant refusal to admit other determinants of value; and the exploitative methods of market capitalism in the West (especially its younger cousin, franchise capitalism) and of large-scale socialist land-use in the East.[5] But they derive also from an avoidance of political engagement, an avoidance which is encouraged by those strands of Romanticism most closely tied to ideas of nature. The remarkably sensitive and oft-quoted final couplet of Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode," for example ("To me the meanest flower that blows can give / Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears" [205-06]), leaves little room for addressing those things which do not "lie too deep for tears" but should provoke concern or even outrage.

Jonathan Bate formalizes in Romantic Ecology the myth of Romantic origins that underpins much late-twentieth-century environmentalism, by locating Wordsworth at the very beginning of explicitly environmental writing. He proposes several different intentions for his book in its first chapter, many of them revolutionary in academic terms. I need to concern myself first, however, with one that may seem quite ordinary. Bate approvingly quotes Samuel Johnson on the function of literature ("The only end of writing is to enable the readers better to enjoy life, or better to endure

it") as an antidote to "all the theorizing of the last two hundred years, and in particular the last twenty." Bate then makes his first declaration of critical purpose:

> This book is dedicated to the proposition that the way in which William Wordsworth sought to enable his readers better to enjoy or to endure life was by teaching them to look at or dwell in the natural world. (4)

Bate's reading of Wordsworth is in general both attractive and persuasive. It is not my intention here to question his critical judgements, though some of his reviewers have done just that, notably Peter Manning and Stuart Peterfreund. However, Bate's version of ecology is not as revolutionary as he thinks it is, and this discrepancy derives from his oversight in not questioning issues raised symptomatically by the false binary of "enjoy" and "endure." If "the only end of writing" is to provide a motive for optimum human pleasure, then the effect of writing on the environment can only be collateral, at one remove from the environment. Such writing can only illuminate the potential effect that nature can have on human existence, but Bate wishes his writing to be deeply and constructively political in the opposite direction: to regulate the effect of human existence on nature.

But there is another difficulty with Bate's method. Bate's reading of Wordsworth "brings Romanticism to bear on what are likely to be some of the most pressing political issues of the coming decade: the greenhouse effect and the depletion of the ozone layer, the destruction of the tropical rainforest, acid rain, the pollution of the sea, and, more locally, the concreting of England's green and pleasant land" (9). Bate discusses the crisis in the environment in order to justify his reading of Wordsworth, but uses his

reading of Wordsworth to justify his discussion of the environmental crisis; the one circularly legitimizes the other. Bate's private investment in literary studies, and in Wordsworth's reputation, is not distinguishable from his human-race investment in what happens next. The connection between Romanticism and environmentalism is simply not as transparent as Bate believes it to be.

In his review of Romantic Ecology, Peter Manning counters Bate by noting that Bate's "apocalyptic perspective, however warranted by events, should not forestall inquiry into Bate's handling of Wordsworth's treatment of conditions in his own day" (282), and goes on to argue that Wordsworth's writing is much more complex than the construct of "Romanticism" that has been built upon it by writers like Bate. Manning agrees with Bate that the ecocritical project is necessary, but disagrees with Bate's argument, methods, and conclusions. Bate's Romanticism is not Wordsworth's, according to Manning, and neither is his environmentalism. Manning asserts that in spite of his emphasis on nature, Wordsworth was fully aware that "earth is never merely earth, that nature and man are already entwined" in a way that Bate seems not to recognize (289).

Bate's version of Romantic ecology is tied closely to ideas about how an individual person can or should live in relation to the world, in spite of his avowed purpose of speaking for the world rather than strictly for humanity. Perhaps recognizing the gap between Bate's hopes and achievement, Karl Kroeber in Ecological Literary Criticism proposes a rather different Romantic ecology, one that works from the biological sciences, including ecology proper, in an attempt "to make humanistic studies more socially responsible" (1). I share Kroeber's sense that literature and criticism can operate effectively

within society as agents of protest, that words need not be merely words. Where I diverge from Kroeber is in his placing at the core of ecological literary criticism a fusion of two things: the science of ecology as it derived from evolutionary theory in the nineteenth century, and the primacy given by the Romantics to states of powerful emotion.

It is Kroeber's position that "ecologically slanted nature poetry began . . . in the romantic era" (67), and that British Romantic poetry was "the first literature to anticipate contemporary biological concerns" (2). These two ideas legitimate each other; to qualify as "ecologically slanted," literature has to either anticipate or address the "contemporary biological concerns" of the critic's time. Ecocriticism, by Kroeber's definition, is inextricably linked to the biological science of ecology as it developed from nineteenth-century theories of evolution. The apparently general title of his book turns out to be instead a programmatic reference to a highly particularized form of scientifically oriented literary study. The equally generalized statement on the book's dust jacket that "ecological criticism is applicable to any writer of any time" is equally misleading, because it does not point out that such criticism has as its focus not the literature that is its ostensible subject, but contemporary science.

Kroeber follows one over-arching principle in his criticism that connects him to Bate and that requires much closer examination than he gives it himself:

> The romantics never forgot what today we too frequently overlook, that the most important elements of our environment are our fellow human beings—most of whom, thank goodness, are not academic critics. (21)

The humour in the concluding clause of this last sentence in Kroeber's

introduction diffuses the force of his ideas expressed in the rest of the sentence: "the most important elements of our environment are our fellow human beings." A great deal depends of course on what Kroeber means by that word "important," but his emphasis throughout his book is not on the way humans influence the natural world (such as through deforestation, setting aside land for parks, or typing on a computer that uses electricity from hydroelectric projects) but on how humans think: about the natural world, about ourselves, and about other people. A person's "environment," etymologically that which surrounds a person, is understood by Kroeber to consist primarily of other people. Because "ecology treats of total interrelationships of organisms and their environment" (23), it is only a short step to the rest of the natural world. However, before I read Kroeber's book, I would not have expected a self-professed ecological critic not to take that step.

Kroeber's faith in the science of ecology as a source of moral guidance is troubling, since science is being questioned on the grounds of both ethics and social responsibility. Kroeber proposes to use literature as the basis for commenting on and discussing science, but then uses science to frame his perspective on literature. The circularity is clear. In addition, science and ecology are far from morally trustworthy. As Greg Garrard puts it, "the more-or-less unthinking anti-scientism of literary studies is replaced in [Kroeber's] revisionism by a faith in scientific responsibility and answerability to democratic control that is as remarkable as it is naive" (450). My distrust of science and ecology can be expressed no more clearly than Neil Evernden has expressed his own distrust:

> If we cannot proceed with a certain development without undesirable consequences, then obviously it is the role of the

> ecologist to find a way for us to proceed with the development while avoiding the consequences. Ecology, in general, is about as subversive as the Chamber of Commerce. ("Beyond Ecology" 93)

Evernden, a professor of Environmental Studies at York, concludes his book The Social Creation of Nature by proposing that ecologists would do well to read creative and imaginative writings about nature in order to give their investigations a more ethical basis. Kroeber, a professor of English at Columbia, proposes that literary critics seeking social responsibility need to engage far more closely with the texts and theories produced by scientists. Kroeber is not wrong to propose this model for critical activity, but he needs to be careful in his reading of the sciences, more careful than he indicates he has been. He characterizes his final chapter as "an amateurish report of sophisticated scientific research and hypothesizing" (20) in order to deny any pretensions to authoritative utterance. Again he uses humour to cloak something he may not want to admit: "amateurish" commentary may be the best that a scientifically oriented literary criticism may be able to achieve.

My objections to Bate derive from the fact that his Romanticism is not the same as my Augustanism, and a sense that his reading practices are not mine. I have the same arguments with Kroeber, that different literatures call for different critical approaches and should provoke different questions, but I also disagree with Kroeber that ecological literary criticism needs the scientific basis that he proposes for it. There is a great deal that students of Augustan literature can learn from both these writers, but there are simply too many discrepancies for me to be able to use their ideas as the basis for an ecological reading of Augustan literature. A form of ecocriticism that can productively

address eighteenth-century literature has to be markedly different from Kroeber's and Bate's Romantic ecology.

In the late twentieth century, environmental discourse is characterized by notions of apocalypse. In the introduction to a special issue on ecological feminism of Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy, Karen Warren summarizes the broad implications of the crisis:

> The 1990s has often been dubbed "The Decade of the Environment." Pollution, deforestation and desertification, ozone destruction, endangerment of species of animals and wildlife, vanishing wildernesses, and energy conservation are some of the visible environmental concerns which have gained international recognition. (1)

Edward Abbey concludes his essay from Beloved of the Sky, a collection of essays and photographs on clearcutting, by saying, "Knowing now what we have learned, unless the need were urgent, I could no more sink the blade of an ax into the tissues of a living tree than I could drive it into the flesh of a fellow human" (5). Catherine Caulfield's essay from the same volume, "The Ancient Forest," opens elegiacally by stating that "Ours was once a forested planet" (163); she goes on to recount the disappearance of forests from North America. The first sentence of William Cronon's essay in Uncommon Ground reads simply, "The time has come to rethink wilderness" (69).[6]

The time has come not just to rethink wilderness, but to rethink nature, the relation of human society to nature, and the role of society in the natural world. Society and the publishing industry recognize this rethinking's cultural significance by affording the competing narratives of destruction and recovery their own section in most bookstores. As

geographer David Demeritt has put it, "environmental narratives are not legitimated in the lofty heights of foundational epistemology but rather in the more approachable and more contested realm of public discussion and debate" (33). Scholars, used to the ideal of rigorous debate, may tremble at the potential for this "more approachable" discussion to degenerate into instability and incoherence, but its common neoromantic foundation has kept it narrowly confined between the extremes of "use" and "preserve." An immense number of texts have entered this "contested realm" in recent years, one side proposing methods either local or global to avoid what is framed in each text as a slightly different kind of apocalypse, and the other insisting that prophesying apocalypse is irresponsible as well as wrong.

This is not to say that the environmental debate is clearly defined or easily summarized. In his book Eco-Socialism: From Deep Ecology to Social Justice, for example, David Pepper distinguishes between the left-wing positions of "red-greens and green-greens" (both of which are "radical ecologists, or 'ecocentrics'") and "'light' greens or 'environmentalists,' i.e. technocentrics" (1). He goes on to separate the ideologies of "welfare (ameliorative) liberalism" (50), "democratic (ameliorative) socialism," and "revolutionary socialism" (51); and also discusses the complex relation between anarcho-communism, anarcho-syndicalism, and eco-anarchism (54-55). Pepper's work is intended to assist in the formulation of a radical leftist synthesis of red and green politics, so he barely touches on the equally wide array of terms used to describe right-wing proponents of ecological sustainability. The care that Pepper considers necessary to distinguish between all these left-wing positions is a symptom of the deeply unsettled state of the debate's vocabulary, which masks the basically oppositional model

of contemporary environmental debate: either you use something (cut down a tree, throw away a plastic bag) or you don't. Either you promote decreased use of natural resources, or you don't.

As I write this introduction, the only published ecocritical work on eighteenth-century literature of which I am aware is Tom Keymer's 1995 essay on Christopher Smart in the Durham University Journal, "Weeping Dryads, Wealden Iron, and Smart's 'Against Despair': Preromantic Ecology?" Keymer argues that Smart's Hymn XXXII is not just a fable of resurrection but "is in part a poem about deforestation" (275); he recovers the historical context of eighteenth-century forest debates in order to recover the poem's significance. Keymer's article is less theoretically inclined than much ecocritical work, emphasizing textual history rather than political engagement. Diane Kelsey McColley has addressed Milton from an ecofeminist perspective in her "Beneficent Hierarchies: Reading Milton Greenly," and Sylvia Bowerbank, Christopher Hitt and Valerie Johnson (among others) have presented ecocritical conference papers on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century texts. Some important background work has been done by Clarence Glacken in Traces on the Rhodian Shore (1967) and Donald Worster in Nature's Economy (1977; second ed., 1994). However, Glacken and Worster are interested in the histories of philosophy and science respectively, and neither man gives any room to eighteeth-century poetry; Worster discusses only Linnaeus and Gilbert White from this period. The field is not, as I thought, quite untouched, but it is still open to possibilities.

Still, quotation from critical and theoretical texts is sparing throughout the following pages. There is a paradox in ecocriticism: eighteenth-century ecocriticism is a new field, but the body of texts on the environment is both

massive and growing. I have found next to no critical comment on several of the poems discussed here, but there has been substantial criticism on a few of the texts I address here, particularly The Seasons and Pope's works, but none of that has been ecocritical. General works on the subject of rural life and labour, especially Raymond Williams's The Country and the City, E.P. Thompson's Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture, and the voluminous bibliography of John Barrell, could have taken over this project completely, and I at times feared that this might become an annotated edition of Barrell's criticism.

My sense was and remains that the subject of literature and the environment needs to be addressed with as tight a focus as a writer can manage. This project is not intended to rebut or to discredit established approaches to eighteenth-century literature, but to read that literature differently and so to offer an alternative that answers some of the questions that the late twentieth century finds most pressing. I have for these reasons left the established discourses to fend for themselves; the readers of this project will likely be familiar enough with those discourses to raise questions without my having to do it for them, and this discourse is new enough that I feared it would be overwhelmed by secondary material. I have felt throughout the fragility of both my argument and the literature it discusses, and I have accordingly sought to insulate them from the jostling community of mature theories in which I trust this kind of approach will in time become established.

After an introductory discussion of seventeenth-century poetry, I look at a variety of Augustan georgics in relation to what I call "georgic ecology," a land ethic that seeks to accommodate society's need to consume natural

resources with nature's need not to be consumed. Romanticism reacted against this attitude of compromise, but so did other eighteenth-century writers. The final chapters address literature by these later poets, non-georgic georgics as well as poems less certain in their generic affiliation which illustrate the potential for an alternative environmental discourse in—and from—the eighteenth century.

The first chapter of this dissertation provides some historical background on the seventeenth century's conflicted relation to the country. It studies early examples of nationalist promotion of closer ties to the land, such as parliamentary speeches by Francis Bacon and Robert Cecil, and proclamations by James I and Charles I requiring London-dwelling nobles to return to their estates. Seventeenth-century poetry offers a similarly complex set of attitudes, so this chapter includes some discussion of seventeenth-century precursors of the eighteenth-century poems that are the focus of this project. It takes up poems by Herbert and Marvell in particular, and concludes with a discussion of John Evelyn's Silva (1662-1706).

The second chapter bridges the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by studying Paradise Lost and John Philips's Miltonic Cyder (1708), the century's first and (throughout most of the following fifty years) most celebrated georgic. Philips's insistent Miltonic and Virgilian allusions, like his frequent use of heroic language, indicate the seriousness with which he regards the fate of England's trees. The many tensions in Cyder (between imitation and originality, between heroic and mock-heroic) have led to widely conflicting accounts of the poem. I argue that these are a product of the attitudes toward the environment held by Philips's readers.

Georgics after Cyder diverged from the model of agricultural advice

prescribed by Virgil's original and Dryden's translation of the Georgics. This third chapter illustrates the variety possible in the Augustan georgic by discussing three examples of the genre: Pope's Windsor-Forest (1713), Anne Irwin's Castle-Howard (1732), and Robert Dodsley's Agriculture (1755). Windsor-Forest still refuses to pack itself tidily into any one of the specialized genres proposed for it: the loco-descriptive, the georgic and recently the silvan (Cummings). Irwin in Castle-Howard consciously asserts Hesiod's influence on her writing, in contrast to the Virgilianism praised by Addison in his "Essay on the Georgics." Dodsley tried to write a pure georgic but, as negative public and critical reaction to the poem implied, was unable to contain his awareness of environmental conflict within the ideology of progress encouraged by his genre.

The fourth chapter looks at James Thomson's The Seasons (1726-46). This poem has long been the most influential of the Augustan georgics, but it is in some senses the least georgic of them as well. For example, the conventional requirement of technical instruction (usually about agriculture) remains unfulfilled except in a few short passages that almost disappear in the context of the poem's 5500-line final version. Given Philips's success in Cyder at evoking and managing a complex response to the landscape, though, The Seasons is that poem's successor in the tradition of ecological literature. Like Cyder it emphasizes the significance of natural scenes and objects to the georgic model, but more than Cyder it excludes almost all aspects of this model but its digressive form.

The fifth chapter discusses poetry about landscape gardening, and begins to introduce non-georgic poetry about the land. William Mason's georgic The English Garden (1772-82) is central to the history of English

writing about gardens, as is Pope's "Epistle to Burlington" (1731), but Anna Seward's poem "The Lake" [1782?] might be even more important in its simultaneous description of and disagreement with the aims and procedures of landscape gardening.[7] The chapter questions the narrative of progress toward control of nature or a natural scene, especially as a manipulated landscape. The discourse of naturalness in gardening is an important step toward both Romanticism and environmentalism; both advocate exactly the kind of hands-off approach to which landscape gardeners in the eighteenth century aspired in their claims to perfect the natural self-expression of the land being landscaped, "the genius of the place."

As a further step in discussing the possibility of environmental poetry before the end of the eighteenth century, the sixth chapter focuses on poems protesting the cutting of trees. Beginning with Margaret Cavendish's "A Dialogue Between an Oake, and a Man Cutting him Downe," it considers Anne Finch's "Upon My Lord Winchilsea," Elizabeth Carter's "To Dr. Walwyn," and Mary Leapor's "Crumble-Hall" as different approaches to the problem of how to express ecological concern in a period that had not developed the vocabulary for it. Additionally, it considers the role of eighteenth-century writing by women in the ecological tradition. As John Murdoch puts it, "The Georgic is the characteristic mode of eighteenth-century writing about landscape" (189). Women, however, did not write georgics; Anne Irwin's Castle-Howard is the only example I am familiar with. This chapter suggests what relations to nature might characterize eighteenth-century women's poetry about landscape.

Finally, the conclusion works toward summarizing the Augustan ecocriticism that this project has attempted. It proposes a model of "georgic

ecology," drawing especially on Cyder and Agriculture, as well as a model for Augustan response to this quintessentially Augustan mode. It attempts to synthesize these forms of environmentalism into a singular "Augustan ecology."

Philosopher Robert P. Harrison proposes that "the religion, art, ideas, institutions, and science through which a culture expresses itself are ultimately reflections of the ways it relates to nature," and that "human beings, unlike other living species, live not in nature but in their relation to nature. Even the belief that we are a part of nature is a mode of relating to it" (426). Ecocriticism therefore occupies a doubled space, reflexively seeking to analyze expressions of ideas for evidence of human relations to nature while at the same time creating expressions of ideas that themselves can be analyzed for expressions of ideas of human relations to nature. The dizzying levels of self-awareness of such work are complicated by literature's fundamental complexity:

> To the degree that it is literature, its final meaning is elusive, unstable, open to revision and reconsideration. To the degree that it is literature, it is a textual index of our irreducible dismay. (Harrison 434)

Literature is therefore perhaps most effective as a mirror held up not to nature but to culture, illustrating and so domesticating "our irreducible dismay" before an incomprehensible world—but "when the world dumbfounds us, when we can't find the words for what we want to say, it takes literature to help us become loquacious again, for literature finds the voice of what cannot be spoken outrightly" (435). This dissertation is an attempt at rediscovering the ecological voice of Augustan poetry, at helping it

to speak and be understood, whether or not it speaks outrightly. The long period of Romanticism, in which we still find ourselves, has no answers for those seeking a fuller, healthier, more sustainable relation to the environment. This dissertation seeks—without nostalgia—to recall the answers offered by an earlier period, to see if those other answers might be more fruitful.

Chapter 1

Approaches to Augustan Landscape Poetry: Seventeenth-Century Politics and Literature

> Let us arise then and plant, and not give it over till we have repaired the Havock our barbarous Enemies have made: Pardon then this Zeal, O ye Lovers of your Country, if it have transported me! To you Princes, Dukes, Earls, Lords, Knights and Gentlemen, noble Patriots (as most concerned) I speak, to encourage and animate a Work so glorious, so necessary....
>
> (John Evelyn, Silva 262-63)

As Raymond Williams illustrated in The Country and the City, the landscape has always been seen as a threatened space. The recent past has almost always been remembered as a better time for the land and its people, as an age of purity or balance now lost, never mind the real course of events from that time. Williams reminds his readers, for example, that "Sidney's Arcadia, which gives a continuing title to English neo-pastoral, was written in a park which had been made by enclosing a whole village and evicting the tenants" (22). The seventeenth century found it necessary to discuss the relationship between humanity and the environment in some detail and in many different sorts of texts, from Parliamentary debates to Royal proclamations, and from religious verse to georgic prose. The eighteenth century inherited its complex relationship with the land from the previous century, in which writers found a broad spectrum of issues to be addressed and of motivations for addressing them.

Bills for enclosure, sometimes for farmland but more often for "Waste Marish and Watery grounds" (D'Ewes 545), were before Parliament frequently in the last years of Elizabeth's reign. Francis Bacon spoke eloquently in

Parliament against enclosure on more than one occasion, arguing that it would be a sign of England's national decay to see "instead of a whole Town full of people, nought but green Fields, but a Shepherd and a Dog" (551). His 1597 motion against "Inclosures and Depopulation of Towns and Houses of Husbandry and Tillage" led directly to the formulation of a committee to address problems caused by enclosure (551-52). This committee had its mandate expanded to cover not just "Inclosures and Tillage" but also "the punishment of Rogues and relief of the Poor." The issues were at first thought to be related closely enough to need discussion simultaneously, rather than individually. After their first week of deliberation, though, Sir Francis Hastings complained in Parliament that the members "had spent all their travel hitherto only about the said Inclosures and Tillage, and nothing about the said Rogues and Poor" (555). He therefore proposed that "Rogues and Poor" be dealt with by bills formulated by other members of Parliament, freeing the committee to pursue its original focus, and the House agreed. The fate of the land was henceforth considered on its own, separately from the fate of people making their living on the land.

Bacon was the person in Parliament most interested in the problems of enclosure, tillage, and depopulation, addressing Parliament six times in late 1597 (D'Ewes 551-52, 557, 558, 560, 562, 568). The most detailed discussion of the subject recorded in D'Ewes's Journal, though, comes in 1601, during a debate "whether the Statute of Tillage should be continued" (674). This statute required all farmers to sow and harvest a certain space of ground annually; the members debated whether the free market that would be created by repealing the statute would maintain the nation's grain supply or cause starvation among the poor as prices rose beyond their reach. Bacon was

among the first to speak to the question, offering a Latin phrase and a proverbial connection between the welfare of a farmer and the might of a soldier, placing England's relation to its land in a traditional context. Sir Walter Raleigh advocated an early version of laissez-faire economics, proposing that "the best course is to set it [tillage] at liberty, and leave every man free, which is the desire of a true English man" (D'Ewes 674); the pragmatic pastoralist of "The Nymph's Reply" was clearly also a pragmatic politician.

But the longest speech reported by D'Ewes is Robert Cecil's, an emphatic defense of the nationalist project of agriculture:

> I do not dwell in the Country, I am not acquainted with the Plough: But I think that whosoever doth not maintain the Plough, destroys this Kingdom. . . . (674)

The connection between agriculture and nation-building is not metaphoric for Cecil, as it seems to be for Bacon. Rather, Cecil states unequivocally that farming—"the Plough"—is the social and economic base upon which the nation rests. Furthermore, Cecil recognizes the scarcity of alternatives open to the poor, should they not farm the land:

> If we debar Tillage, we give scope to the Depopulator; And then if the Poor being thrust out of their Houses go to dwell with others, straight we catch them with the Statute of Inmates; if they wander abroad, they are within danger of the Statute of the Poor to be whipt. So by this means undo this Statute, and you indanger many thousands. (674)

Not just the vagaries of harvests and weather contribute to the precarious state of the English rural poor. As Cecil notes, by 1601 the poor are

thoroughly regulated by statutes enforcing industry and punishing idleness either real or perceived; controlling employment and economic activity; and proscribing leisure activities (numerous bills restraining alehouses, maltsters, and "Tippling-Houses" [676] came before the 1597 and 1601 Parliaments). Agriculture, Cecil emphasizes, is not just growing plants from seed and gleaning seeds from plants; it implies and maintains the increasingly commercial model of English society. It can hardly be surprising, given the forcefulness of Cecil's response, that the statute was not repealed.

Agriculture is not the only way of relating to the land, though. The frequent Royal Proclamations by James I and Charles I reveal additional motives for living in the country: local government, and grassroots political action. In particular, James's response to the enclosure riots of 1607 accords considerable political sophistication to the rioters. James contends "that we have been careful to prevent such Enclosures, and Depopulations, & that it hath been an ordinary charge given by Us to our Justices of Assises . . . to enquire of all unlawfull Depopulations and Enclosures, and to take order to remedie the same, and to punish the Offenders therein according to the due course of Lawe" (Larkin and Hughes 153). He agrees with the principle guiding the so-called diggers or levellers, that enclosures causing depopulation have no place in England, but cannot accept the diggers' assuming civic authority. Accordingly, James shifts the terrain of social contest in which the diggers and the enclosers are engaged. His argument with the diggers stems at bottom not from disagreement, but from their "unjustly throw[ing] a slaunder upon our Government by taking that pretense for their disobedience" (153). The question is not whether the diggers are justified in their actions, but whether they can claim the King's

approval. James states categorically that they cannot, and that is all it takes to confirm their guilt.

In his second proclamation on the riots, James articulates even more carefully his understanding of the countryside and his attitude toward the project of the diggers:

> For as Wee cannot but know, that the glorie and strength of all Kings consisteth in the multitude of Subjects, so may Wee not forget that it is a speciall and peculiar preheminence of these Countreyes, over which God hath placed Us, that they do excell in breeding and nourishing of able and serviceable people, both for Warre and Peace, which Wee doe justly esteeme above all Treasure and Commodities, which our said dominions do otherwise so plentifully yeeld unto Us. (Larkin and Hughes 155)

James openly connects his political power as a monarch ("glorie and strength") to the number of his subjects, and their number and abilities ("able and serviceable people") to the need to prohibit depopulating enclosures. He specifically refers to his divinely sanctioned role as King, and praises the people for their value as a national resource: "it must bee farre from our inclination to suffer any tolleration of that which may bee any occasion to decay or diminish our people" (155). Again, he explicitly agrees with the diggers' principles.

However, he also explicitly states the rationale behind his determined stand against the diggers:

> neither the pretence of any wrongs received, nor our great mislike of depopulation in generall, can in any wise stay

> us any longer, from a severe and just prosecution of such as shall take upon them to be their owne judges and reformers, whether in this or any other pretended grievance. (156)

James again shifts the discursive field away from the point of contention to the idea of contention itself. After all, James holds essentially the same attitude toward the land held by the diggers, albeit he also sees the people as a material resource; in this proclamation, he goes on to command "the abuses of Depopulations and unlawfull Inclosures to be further looked into," and to insist that remedies must be found (157). (Larkin and Hughes confirm in a footnote that in the next year "Ten persons were charged with enclosing from 200 to 500 acres each in Lincolnshire, and five persons similarly charged in Northants" [157, n. 4].) James closes the proclamation with a promise "to lend our eares to humble and just complaints, and to affoord our people Justice and favour both in this and all occasions fit for a King to doe for his good subjects in generall and in particular" (158). In spite of the numerous qualifiers ("humble and just complaints," "occasions fit for a King," "good subjects" [emphasis mine]), James still makes a pact here with the rioters as well as with the common population of England and Scotland, to uphold their interests in the land.

Upholding the interests of the poor and the labourers is also a motive behind James's and Charles's numerous proclamations that the nobility should leave the city and return to their estates. In the first months of his reign, surrounded by people seemingly without interest in returning to the country, James reminds the sojourning nobles that "th'execution of things incident to their charge is omitted, and Hospitalitie exceedingly decayed,

whereby the reliefe of the poorer sort of people is taken away" (Larkin and Hughes 22); Larkin and Hughes note that the same command had earlier been given by Edward VI, by Mary, and twice by Elizabeth (22, n. 3). James is aware of the historical neglect of such proclamations, and concludes his own with a warning: "we do admonish all those whom this Proclamation concerneth, to be so wary, as wee have not cause to make them an example of contempt, which wee must and will doe" (22).

Eleven years later, in October 1614, James repeats his injunction to the nobles, this time appealing to Christian duty to care for the poor, especially at Christmas. If the nobles do not return home, "the government of the Countreys will be weakened, Hospitalitie and the reliefe of the poore (especially at such a time) decayed" (Larkin and Hughes 323-24). Again James ends with a threat, that the persons concerned must return home "upon paine of Our high displeasure, and such punishment as is due for the contempt of Our Royall commandement" (324). Fourteen months later James repeats himself yet more forcefully and specifically, this time stipulating that administrative positions in the country may be given only to "such as shall live and remaine at lest nine moneths of the yeere, in the Shires where they are in Commission" (357). The motivation for this requirement is the frequency with which justices of the peace are absent from official sessions, thereby "manifestly tend[ing] to the hinderance of ordinary Justice" (357), as well as, of course, the "decay of Hospitalitie" (356), apparently continuing to decay twelve years after James's first proclamation on the subject.

Seven years later still, James was again commanding his nobles "to revive the ancient and laudable custome of this Realme, by housekeeping

and hospitality, which in all parts of this Realme is exceedingly decayed" (561). James further intensifies his threats, warning the nobles to obey "upon paine, not only of His Majesties heavy indignation and displeasure, and disablement to hold any such places of service or trust, under His Majestie; but also of such further censure and punishment, as may be inflicted upon them, for such their disobediance and contempt, or neglect of this His Royall commandement" (562). He warns "that all such as shall offende, may receive condigne punishment, without toleration or connivence" (561); Larkin and Hughes here note a letter written five weeks later by the Flemish ambassador, predicting "an imminent revolution, threatened by the Puritans" (561, n. 2), if the King does not soften his position. Four months later, James issues his final proclamation on this topic, this time insisting that the wives and families even of men with permission to live in the city must return to the country (572-74); the primary motive, as usual, is the need for increased hospitality to support the poor. Charles I made only three proclamations on the subject in his 21 years on the throne, and the third was essentially a command that the nobles return home to quell the growing rebellion, but the first two echo James, emphasizing "the neglect of Hospitality, & good House-keeping" (Larkin 112), or "the great decay of Hospitality & good house-keeping" (171).

Clearly, just as the members of Elizabeth's Parliaments recognized a need to think carefully about how the populace ought to live on the land, both James and Charles recognized that the legitimacy of their rule needed to be supported by widespread, popular satisfaction. James in particular went to some lengths to address the social dislocation caused by large-scale or indiscriminate enclosure, and both kings repeatedly tried to coerce the

nobility into returning home to stabilize rural England as a labour-oriented, voluntary welfare state. Neither ruler, however, appears to have had much influence over the aristocracy's decisions about residence. Poets of the seventeenth century put as much effort as the Stuart monarchs into publicizing life on the land as an honorable pursuit, and found just as little success.

Marie Loretto Lilly summarizes the conventional view of seventeenth-century poetry about life on the land, nicely touching on critical distaste for the Augustan georgics, saying: "From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century the poets seem to have wisely avoided the theme of general agriculture" (68). Lilly's comment is accurate in that the seventeenth century produced very few Virgilian georgics, one of the few poetic genres dedicated to discussing life on the land, but Alastair Fowler quite correctly objects to this axiom of literary history, arguing that Renaissance literature has been misrepresented because "English georgic has mostly been discussed by critics of Augustan literature, from an eighteenth-century perspective" (105). Fowler's conception of Renaissance georgic excludes the well-documented imitative relationship between Augustan georgics and their sources, and liberates it from the formalist traits that gradually accumulated around the concept of the georgic in the seventeenth century, finally being collected in Addison's influential 1697 essay on the Georgics. About one hundred years before Addison's essay, Fowler proposes, "the idea of georgic . . . was of a digressive poem containing precepts, instruction in an art, or meditation on the good life. It might touch on labor and the retired life of the country; comparison of historical periods; seasonal change; or landscape description. And it was spoken in the poet's own person, neither elevated like epic nor dramatized and deliberately

unlearned like pastoral" (111). More specifically, Fowler proposes that the seventeenth-century georgic is Hesiodic rather than Virgilian.

Hesiod's Works and Days, however, places an emphasis on practical instruction and physical labour that is not reflected in seventeenth-century estate or country-house poems, what Fowler sees as the period's primary form of the georgic. In both Aemilia Lanyer's "Description of Cooke-ham" and Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst," the poems now regarded as co-temporary inaugurators of the estate-poem tradition, the estate does all the work for its owners:

> The very Hills right humbly did descend,
> When you to tread upon them did intend.
> And as you set your feete, they still did rise,
> Glad that they could receive so rich a prise. (Lanyer 35-38)

> The painted partritch lyes in every field,
> And, for thy messe, is willing to be kill'd. . . .
> Fat, aged carps, that runne into thy net, . . .
> Bright eeles, that emulate them, and leape on land,
> Before the fisher or into his hand. (Jonson 29-30, 33, 37-38)

Both Lanyer and Jonson include figures who labour in the country—Lanyer portrays the Countess of Cumberland hunting with her bow (49-52), and Jonson mentions not just the fisherman (in the quotation above) but also local farmers and their products (47-56)—but neither gives the kind of advice that Hesiod does. The countryside in both poems is strictly sponte sua, giving freely of itself. Labour is largely invisible. Lanyer in particular simply describes a rural scene appropriate to an honoured member of the nobility;

Jonson at least advises Robert Sidney, Penshurst's owner, on how best to live as a socially responsible aristocrat in the country. In both poems, though, the landscape is primarily an adjunct to social descriptions, even if it is in both an especially beautiful adjunct.

Later seventeenth-century writers, whether or not they were directly influenced by Hesiodic georgic, put nature to different uses again. George Herbert in such poems as "The Flower" examines theological issues through the medium of personal relationships with nature. In "The Flower" he at first contains his relationship with nature in a simile describing his reaction to God's presence:

> Grief melts away
> Like snow in May,
> As if there were no such cold thing. (5-7)

Spring growth after a hard snowy winter savours of the miraculous. The difficulties of the winter are forgotten, just as spring was forgotten during the winter. It is an apposite image, if not a very complex one. Through the succeeding stanzas, though, Herbert moves through increasingly complex metaphors and similes, culminating in the penultimate stanza:

> And now in age I bud again,
> After so many deaths I live and write
> I once more smell the dew and rain
> And relish versing. (36-39)

The earlier simile, grief melting like snow in May, makes its connections explicitly enough to control their application. The terms of the comparison have their own individual resonances, but grief and snow meet only in the one point of their both melting away. In this later metaphor Herbert exerts

no such containment. Instead he encourages the resonances and builds them upon each other. The poet buds again; the flower writes anew. The two terms of the comparison, poet and flower, combine in their enthusiasm for each one's environment, language and nature: "I once more smell the dew and rain / And relish versing." The poem's concluding stanza retreats from this complexity and resorts to a more contained description: "we are but flowers that glide," and "Thou [God] hast a garden for us, where to bide" (44, 46). The startling appreciation of the flower's manner of existence turns out to be a means to express standard Christian doctrine of salvation, though it does so beautifully.

In his "Mower" poems, Andrew Marvell offers an intricate picture of rural England's politics. The tension between social groups is at the centre of these poems, sharing the stage with Juliana's disdain for Damon. In "Damon the Mower," that tension is between the shepherd (a classical pastoral figure) and the mower. Recognizing that Marvell's labouring Damon is somewhat idealized does not detract from the force of Marvell's ideas. Damon considers his relation to the environment to be purer than the shepherd's: "This scythe of mine discovers wide / More ground than all his sheep do hide" (51-52). His is the revelation rather than the obscuring of the land, and Damon recognizes that nature rewards him for this:

> On me the morn her dew distills
> Before her darling daffodils:
> And, if at noon my toil me heat,
> The Sun himself licks off my sweat.
> While, going home, the evening sweet
> In cowslip-water bathes my feet. (43-48)

Damon thinks of himself as blessed among men; at least, he would be so if only he thought Juliana thought well of him. His labouring relation to the land confirms his virtue and his worth. The land belongs to the people who work it, as "The Mower Against Gardens" makes clear. More than that, the workers deserve such ownership. Unlike the wealthy, people like Damon who work in the fields are in the company of real fauns and fairies, the spirits of England itself:

> Their statues, polished by some ancient hand,
> May to adorn the gardens stand;
> But howsoe'er the figures do excel,
> The Gods themselves with us do dwell. (37-40)

Humanity is defined through its relationships to the land and to nature. The gardens of the wealthy are the locations of the work that Damon sees as the seduction and vexing of nature, grafting fruit trees and forcing blooms and transplanting exotics. For Damon the state of the land, visible in the relation a person has to the land, signifies the state of humanity. In the "Mower" poems, the land is firmly on the side of the labourer.

In "Upon Appleton-House," a very different poem making a very different point, Marvell again uses landscape as a marker for human worth. The quality of the Fairfax family appears in the quality of their estate. More specifically, the perfection of the estate is due to the perfection of Marvell's pupil, Mary Fairfax:

> 'Tis she that to these gardens gave
> That wondrous beauty which they have;
> She straightness on the woods bestows;
> To her the meadow sweetness owes;

Nothing could make the river be
So crystal-pure but only she;
She yet more pure, sweet, straight, and fair,
Than gardens, woods, meads, rivers are. (689-96)

Both the daughter and the garden are in Marvell's reading the care of Thomas Fairfax. The value of both is owing to his great skill in tending them; Fairfax proved his worth by resigning his post as commander of the Parliamentary army, and is rewarded in the person and character of his daughter as well as the beauty of his estate, itself a reward for success in battle. The state of the land, as well as the state of his daughter, guarantees Fairfax's social and political probity.

But whereas poets as diverse as Lanyer, Jonson, Herbert and Marvell were writing texts of manageable size about specific places or individual ways of approaching the landscape, some few writers were attempting massive works aiming to synthesize the many perspectives on the environment. The dominant literary work of this sort is Paradise Lost (discussed in the next chapter, below). Dryden's translation of Virgil's Georgics was also important, especially insofar as it enabled the Augustan vogue for the georgic. The other text, too often mentioned but not discussed, is John Evelyn's mammoth prose georgic Silva, which is the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century prose works have been argued into the georgic canon at least twice recently, Defoe's Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain by Pat Rogers, and Bacon's philosophic writings by James S. Tillman. One might object to Silva's place in that tradition on the grounds that Silva, unlike Bacon's or Defoe's works, is more technical than either of these examples, but the generic division of Evelyn's intellectual

labour is not as clear as that. As Douglas Chambers has explained, Silva "offered a precendent [sic] for thinking of silviculture as more than a merely remunerative or patriotic exercise. It provided the moral and aesthetic justification" for planting trees (32). Chambers refers here to the fourth book of Silva, "An Historical Account of the Sacredness and Use of Standing Groves, &c.," which is placed after the chapter specified as the conclusion, but his arguments apply just as strongly to the first three books—though he himself seems not to think so.[1] Tillman comments of Bacon's writings that they are "of high literary value [and are] directed by a consistent georgic impulse to teach and encourage man in the scientific labor of the cultivation and gathering of the fruit of knowledge for the storehouse of philosophy" (357-58). No such extended metaphors are necessary to accommodate the contents of Silva to the agricultural heritage of the georgic tradition, and Evelyn clearly writes prose of "high literary value" and operates in accordance with a "georgic impulse to teach." A georgic text is moral, descriptive, and prescriptive: these qualities are clearly legible in Silva, an influential work which proposed, for patriotic, aesthetic, and economic reasons, to alter England's agricultural policy to emphasize trees over grain.

Like The Seasons, Silva continued to grow and change throughout its author's life.[2] It began as a presentation to the Royal Society on 15 October 1662 "upon occasion of certaine Queries sent us by the Commissioners of his Majesties Navy," and was "the first Booke that was Printed by Order of the Society, & their Printer, since it was a corporation" (Evelyn, Diary 446). By 1729, the date of the folio fifth edition, Silva included the separate works Terra: A Philosophical Discourse of Earth; Pomona: Or, An Appendix Concerning Fruit-Trees, In Relation to Cider, The Making, and several Ways

of ordering it; Acetaria: A Discourse on Sallets; and Kalendarium Hortense: or, The Gardener's Almanack. It had become a general reference work, Pomona even including excerpts from eleven additional sources on methods for making good cider, and had grown far beyond its specialist audience of Navy Commissioners and members of the Royal Society.

In writing Silva, Evelyn attempted to fulfil two distinct purposes: to educate the relevant segments of the British populace into a more responsible relationship with the management of trees, and to vindicate the new science in general and the Royal Society in particular. The first is a thoroughly georgic intention, but it is the second that dominates Evelyn's prefatory "To the Reader" (first appearing in the 1679 third edition) and hence dictates the compendiousness and detail of the work as a whole in this and subsequent editions. The second of these two purposes is clearly (if inflammatorily) summarized in Evelyn's preface:

> to disabuse some (otherwise) well-meaning People, who led away and perverted by the Noise of a few Ignorant and Comical Buffoons (whose Malevolence or Impertinencies entitle them to nothing that is truly Great and Venerable) are, with an Insolence suitable to their Understanding, still crying out, and asking, What have the Society done? (viii)

As it shifted in form over the next forty years, Silva increasingly became a tool with which to defend the Royal Society from attacks. Accordingly, Evelyn specifies that he writes in order to educate those worth educating, not "to gratify these magnificent Fops, whose Talents reach but to the adjusting of their Perukes, courting a Miss, or, at the farthest, writing a smutty or scurrilous Libel (which they would have to pass for genuine Wit)" (Silva

viii); he writes against the "magnificent Fops," to persons worth the Society's labours. Silva thus represents Evelyn's attempt to gain cultural authority for the Royal Society through his work's authoritative erudition and literary quality. Only in the 1679 preface (reprinted in subsequent editions) does he engage directly with the Royal Society's critics; Silva up to that time had been a refutation by example, rather than an argument, and the rest of the book (excluding the preface) continued to be so.

Evelyn uses prose rather than poetry, even for so georgic a work, because he wishes to link his work and the Royal Society's with the work of other English scientific prose-writers, particularly Francis Bacon. However, poetry is quoted throughout as ornament, as evidence, and as conclusion, operating mnemonically or aphoristically. Poems by Beale, Bohun, Cowley, and Evelyn's son John are prefixed to the main body of the work; quotations from Virgil's Georgics begin on the second page of the introduction and recur frequently throughout; fully sixteen of the twenty chapters that comprise Silva's first book quote at least one poem, and three of the other four chapters end by referring to another scientific text; and Silva proper concludes with the younger John Evelyn's translation of René Rapin's second book of The Garden. Importantly, Evelyn takes pains to make conspicuous his text's relation to Virgil's Georgics. The introduction, which is the first chapter of Silva's first book, quotes the Georgics nine times, in both the original Latin and an English translation.

The act of translation is not foregrounded in the text, and no source for the English translation is given, but it seems clear that Silva represents Evelyn's attempt to recreate Virgil's poem of agricultural advice for Italy as a parallel text of silvicultural advice for England. Evelyn's patriotism is

apparent throughout Silva, but it rarely appears more forcefully than in the first sentence of the introduction:

> there is nothing which seems more fatally to threaten a Weakning, if not a Dissolution of the Strength of this famous and flourishing Nation, than the sensible and notorious Decay of her Wooden Walls, when either through Time, Negligence, or other Accident, the present Navy shall be worn out and impair'd. (1)

In Evelyn's view, the cutting of trees to supply fuel for industry (particularly for the glass-works and iron-mills, 251-52 and 259) and to increase available space for agriculture threatens "utterly to extirpate, demolish, and raze, as it were, all those many goodly Woods and Forests, which our more prudent Ancestors left standing, for the Ornament and Service of their Country" (2). Evelyn explicitly states the social motivations for personal action: a person should compare favourably with his or her ancestors; the traditional roles of the native forest ("Ornament and Service") ought to be maintained; and the English nation deserves the love of its people. The verbs "extirpate," "demolish," and "raze" are strong words indeed, bearing significance given them by their root in the language of warfare. Evelyn's purpose in Silva is not entirely descriptive; this book is a georgic program for action, unusual in its detail and its depth of background information but just as much a call to arms as any political pamphlet.

The polemical nature of Silva's appeal becomes clear when Evelyn's passion is related to statistics on the actual size of England's forests, though "statistics" may be too strong a word for what is little better than authoritative conjecture about England's forests over the last millennium. In the

Domesday Book of 1086, it was

> estimated that the total woodland area was about 15 per cent of England, . . . [but] by the mid-fourteenth century, only about 10 per cent of England was wooded. . . . A contemporary estimate, in the late seventeenth century, suggested that the woodland area of England was about 1.2 million hectares (or 8 per cent), implying that clearance during the previous 350 years had been slow. (Henderson-Howat 24)

The perception of loss recorded in numerous texts from the sixteenth century onward, though no more strongly than in Silva, still failed to halt actual loss: "the total area of woodland cover continued to fall, and, when the Forestry Commission was established in 1919, it was only 5 per cent" (Henderson-Howat 26). Woodland cover has since 1919 recovered to fourteenth-century levels, but much of that increase has come from plantations of non-native species; according to Peter Marren, "less than 2 per cent of the land surface" still consists of "ancient and natural woodland" (14), "one of the smallest areas of natural woodland in any European country" (16). This continued decline in woodland makes it obvious that Evelyn saved neither British forests nor British forestry, but Henderson-Howat does note that the long decline was temporarily slowed by planting undertaken "in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (26), planting influenced by Evelyn and the other writers on improvement.

The success of Silva must therefore be measured by some other means than the book's impact on the forests. Silva is a fundamentally literary text, with clear links to the georgic tradition, especially to the georgic's digressive

nature. Digressions throughout Silva repeatedly lead Evelyn far from his apparently intended subject. "Of the Horn-Beam," Chapter Six of Book One, moves from a description of the species, through comments on methods for encouraging it to take root, to a description of "that inexhaustible Magazine at Brompton-Park" (49), and to contemplation of "Objects yet more worthy our noblest Speculations, . . . namely, the Cœlestial Paradise" (50). After a brief but sensually rich description of the pleasures to be expected from a Paradise so infinitely greater than even Brompton Park (George London and Henry Wise's nursery, which was one of the main suppliers for the "mania for tree-planting" Evelyn helped to initiate [Lasdun 43]), Evelyn grudgingly returns to the horn-beam:

> I beg no Pardon for the Application, but deplore my no better Use of it; and that whilst I am thus upon the Wing, I must now descend so soon again. (50)

Evelyn manages to hold firm to the subject of growing a good horn-beam for timber through only one paragraph, whereupon his mention that horn-beams are often planted at the gates of cities in Germany leads him to describe a huge plane tree, lime, and oak outside Strasburg. Rather than offer a conclusion to the chapter, Evelyn simply interrupts himself at this point with 10 lines on the horn-beam from his son's translation of Rapin's The Garden; the next chapter, "Of the Ash," entirely lacks transition from the previous chapter.

The style of Silva has caused interpretive difficulties for Evelyn's readers. Arthur Ponsonby in his biography of Evelyn claims that Evelyn "indulges in no flights of rhetoric. He just tells you what he knows" (295), in "the language of the gardener and the workman" (300). On quite the other

hand, John Bowle in his own biography of Evelyn calls Silva's chapter on the oak "a panegyric, almost a prose poem" (116), but also complains that by book's end "Evelyn's native pedantry or love of learning swamp[s] the original and businesslike purpose of the book" (120-21); he sees Evelyn as a writer almost pathologically incapable of choosing between "hard-hitting prose" and "labyrinths of pedantic classical learning in the manner of . . . the coruscations of erudition in the works of Sir Thomas Browne" (3). Neither Ponsonby nor Bowle notes Evelyn's attention to literary detail in Silva, and hence neither questions his prose style.

Interestingly, the clearest examples of Evelyn's literary design are his descriptions of treed landscapes. For Evelyn, few things can match the beauty of a worked landscape, in which signs of economic profit mingle with aesthetic beauty:

> if thus his Majesty's Forests and Chases were stored, viz. with this spreading Tree [the oak] at handsome Intervals, by which Grazing might be improved for the feeding of Deer and Cattle under them . . . benignly visited with the Gleams of the Sun, and adorned with the distant Landskips appearing through the Glades and frequent Valleys . . . [as] the Poet [Lucretius] describes his Olive-Groves, nothing could be more ravishing. . . . (23-24)

The term "ravishing" is important to Evelyn's ideas of beauty, recurring often at moments when Silva erupts into praise of trees in either the specific or the abstract sense. Evelyn avows that his project is commercial and economic: he openly states that he encourages silviculture for the good of the nation (its navy's strength and its Treasury's wealth). Still, aesthetics are important in

his relation to landscape ("the Gleams of the Sun"), and poetic example is important to his understanding of that relation. Nothing is more natural for Evelyn than to mix praise of rural beauty with celebration of economic advantage, and it is above all else this mixing of perceptual codes that confirms Silva's place in the georgic tradition.

Evelyn's idea of Holland as a good country exemplifies this mixing. In Holland, the planting of trees, in Evelyn's opinion to imitate natural landscapes, signifies an attempt to create an ideal world: "is there a more ravishing or delightful Object, than to behold these Trees, in even Lines before their Doors, so as they seem like Cities in a Wood?" (71). He praises Holland highly as a tree-growing nation, particularly in contrast to France: "there is nothing more exposed, wild, and less pleasant than the common Roads of France for Want of Shade" (60). Nationalism is not important to him when he comes to look for examples of a positive relation with trees, although it is nationalism that prompts him to recommend England begin a broad program of planting. His celebration of Holland easily modulates, in fact, into an attack on his own countrymen:

> Diræ and Curses therefore on those inhumane and ambitious Tyrants, who, not contented with their own Dominions, invade their peaceful Neighbour, and send their Legions, without Distinction, to destroy and level to the Ground such venerable and goodly Plantations, and noble Avenues, irreparable Marks of their Barbarity! (71)

> . . . [T]he spoil and wasting of this necessary Material is no less than a publick Calamity: This Iohn Duke of Lancaster

> knew well enough, when, to revenge the Depredations made upon the English Borders, 'tis said, he set four and twenty thousand Axes at Work at once, to destroy the Woods in Scotland. (250)

Evelyn mentions a few times the practice during the Civil War of destroying the forests of those nobles whose estates were seized; the symbolic fact of such destruction was perhaps as important as its economic character. Trees throughout England are known and celebrated for their associations with important figures.[3] For this reason alone Evelyn cannot forgive the actions of "the late Usurpers and Sequestrators" in cutting down forests on ancestral estates (262).

His prohibition against cutting trees necessarily extends into London, because that is where the bulk of the nation's population resides (along with, as James I and Charles I realized, many of the nobles who ought to be in the country caring for their estates). Evelyn defends for both practical and aesthetic reasons the lives of trees already growing in the city:

> It is to be considered how exceedingly that pernicious Smoak of the Sea-coal is increased in and about London . . . and the Buildings invironing them, and inclosing it in amongst them, which does so universally contaminate the Air, that what Plantations of Trees shall now be begun in any of those Places, will have much ado, great Difficulty, and require a long Time to be brought to any tolerable Perfection. . . . (212)

Evelyn acknowledges that the impulse behind cutting trees in the city is to enable more trees to be planted, to provide the urban landscape with groves of trees of equal size. The intent was to make the urban prospect accord more

closely with the ideal rural prospect: a scene filled with large old trees of similar age, representing a long tradition of conservation. Evelyn considers this impulse admirable, but doubts that in a growing environment of the quality of London's the replacement trees will reach with speed "any tolerable Perfection." He worries that they may in fact never attain such a state, but believes that their lives are worth more than their potential contributions to the city's aesthetics. Clearly, Evelyn allows significant room in silviculture for other kinds of appreciation of trees. Without other ways of seeing, there would be no reason to encourage the presence of trees in London at all.

At many points the complexity of Evelyn's response to trees exceeds the simple division of aesthetics and economics. In particular, Evelyn expresses deep respect for very old, very large trees. He digresses repeatedly to recount mythic stories of huge trees, devoting almost all of his chapter "Of the Age, Stature, and Felling of Trees" to a discussion of large ancient trees. Many of the examples are from classical authors, many others from hearsay about colonial exploration ("The Mexican Emperor is said to have had a Tree in his Garden, under whose Shade a thousand Men might sit at a competent Distance" [194]). However, Evelyn's patriotism leads him to reassert the dominance of England in the competition he imagines:

> What goodly Trees were of Old adored, and consecrated by the Driads, I leave to conjecture from the stories of our antient Britains, who had they left Records of their Prodigies in this Kind, would doubtless have furnished us with Examples as remarkable for the Growth and Stature of Trees, as any which we have deduced from the Writers of Foreign Countries.... (195)

Evelyn cannot resist completing the passage with another attack against those responsible for "the Havock which has universally been made, and the little Care to improve our Woods," but boasts that even with such interference the woods of Britain might be measured against the forests of any country in the world, at any time. The reference to dryads is one of only two references in Silva to them; the other comes in the course of Evelyn's recommendation that New England become a major producer of iron in order to reduce the commercial pressure on "the Royal Oaks, and their Hamadryads" (259). Interestingly, because of the connection through the idea of the dryad, Evelyn's suggestion that the British iron industry be shut down is also one of the occasions when his economic nationalism is more sophisticated than an assertion that British products are likely to be better than those of other countries, simply because they are British. More frequently Evelyn fears becoming dependent on foreign trade for timber; in the case of the English ironworks, though, Evelyn slips from economics into the quasi-religious language of forest spirits.[4]

As in any good georgic, though, the literary qualities of Silva do not take away from the book's essentially instructional intent, nor do they distract Evelyn from the purpose stated in the rest of the book's subtitle: to encourage the Propagation of Timber in His Majesty's Dominions. Eventually, Evelyn turns to address the King directly. First he asserts the national role the forest should occupy:

> our Forests are undoubtedly the greatest Magazines of the Wealth and Glory of this Nation, and our Oaks the truest Oracles of its Perpetuity and Happiness, as being the only Support of that Navigation which makes us fear'd Abroad,

> and flourish at Home. . . . (256)

Britain has imported wood continuously since at least the fourteenth century (Henderson-Howat 25), but the late seventeenth century saw a rise of economic nationalism in Britain roughly parallel with the rise of British colonialism. The final paragraph of the didactic portion of Silva (the final book being "An Historical Account of the Sacredness and Use of Standing Groves, &c." [280b][5]) includes specific reference to such ideas:

> The want of Timber, and the necessity of being supply'd by Foreign Countries, if not prevented by better and more industrious Instruments, may prove in a short time a greater mischief to the Publick, than the late diminution of the Coin. (278b)

Evelyn goes on to cite Luther's colleague "the learned Melancthon," Philip Schwartzerd, who a hundred years before had warned that "the want of three Things would be the Ruin of Europe; Lignum, probam Monetam, probos Amicos; Timber, Good Money and Sincere Friends" (278b-79b). Little can be done about currency devaluation or a dearth of friends, Evelyn admits, but the lack of useful timber can be easily remedied.

All of Silva, until this final chapter of Book Three, has been advice for the propagation and harvesting of trees for commercial, and only occasionally aesthetic, use. Evelyn in this concluding chapter therefore seeks to persuade the reader to follow his program, and he draws on several rhetorical techniques in his attempt to do so. There are direct commands (256-57), insinuations that foreigners might prove more adept at forestry than the British (264), references to ancient and celebrated precedents for such attention to the woods (277-78a), even implied insults against the reader and

the nation, but the tool that Evelyn uses most frequently here is the calculation of profit. Evelyn follows the calculations of John Smith, author of England's Improvement Reviv'd,[6] in his longest discussion of profit, but he also recounts narratives of financial gains earned by several landowners who had been convinced (or who had decided) either to plant trees or to enforce their planting by tenants, and who had subsequently made large fortunes from their new forests (274-76).

The numbers used in Evelyn's retelling of Smith's calculations are so vast that they must have been designed to impress his reader:[7]

> a thousand Acres of Land, planted at one Foot interval in 7201 Rows, taking up 51854401 Plants of Oak, Ash, Chesnut (or to be sown) taking up 17284800 of each Sort, and fit to be transplanted at three Years Period (if set in good Ground) are worth Eighteen-pence the Hundred; and there being 345696 Hundred, it amounts to no less than 25927 l. 4 s. besides the Chesnuts, of which there being 1728480 l. (valued at, and worth half a Crown the Hundred) they come to 21606 l. and the Total of all, to 47533 l. 4 s. (278a)

Evelyn continues to follow Smith's calculations, stating that if coppice-trees were maintained at four-foot intervals and harvested every eleven years, and if wheat were sown among the trees, then after seven harvests the land would have yielded "200000 l" (278a). If the twenty thousand acres of royal forest were managed this carefully, but with an emphasis on timber-trees rather than coppice-wood, the forests "would be worth 13516660 l. an immense and stupendous Sum, and an everlasting Supply for all the Uses both of Sea and Land" (279a). It seems likely that Evelyn intends to impress,

perhaps even to confuse, rather than to educate his reader with these calculations. For example, he does not clearly distinguish between separate narratives of profit from coppice and timber, nor even between profits from differently managed coppices. The reader is snowed under by detail, not educated into agreement.

Verse, no matter how didactic it seeks to be, is incapable of handling such calculations; numbers like "1728480" simply will not scan. However, Evelyn does rely on the same zeal found in poetry and devotional writings. At one point he translates the passion of Nehemiah for rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem into a passion for replanting forests in England:

> Let us arise then and plant, and not give it over till we have repaired the Havock our barbarous Enemies have made: Pardon then this Zeal, O ye Lovers of your Country, if it have transported me! To you Princes, Dukes, Earls, Lords, Knights and Gentlemen, noble Patriots (as most concerned) I speak, to encourage and animate a Work so glorious, so necessary. . . . (262-63, qtd. above in epigraph)

Passion is of course not the sole property of verse, but such passionate language as this is far indeed from the prose of Francis Bacon, one of Evelyn's models. The ecstatic and prophetic tenor of these lines recurs occasionally throughout Silva as patriotic, or religious, or aesthetic celebration of trees and woods. The land provokes Evelyn to attempt to express the impulses of aesthetic appreciation and of economic theory, both of them deeply suffused with Evelyn's nationalism, and how they affect his understanding of the land. But it also provokes him to passionately affirm an allegiance to the land which relates to both aesthetics and economics but is reducible to neither.

Evelyn quotes the Georgics in his preface for the authority of example, in both English and Latin:

> ----------Verbis ea vincere magnum
> Quàm sit, & angustis hunc addere rebus honorem!
> ----------How hard it was
> Low Subjects with illustrious Words to grace! (iii)

Evelyn's "Illustrious Words," however, had more power than the message he sought to express with them. As we have seen, Evelyn in Silva failed to halt either the deforestation of Britain or Britain's reliance on imported timber: "By 1914, annual imports amounted to some 15 million tonnes and domestic wood production was estimated to be only about one million tonnes per year," while in the 1990s "about 87 per cent of requirements are still imported" (Henderson-Howat 25). Still, Silva retains its authoritative place within scientific history; libraries catalogue it with scientific treatises on forestry, not with either history or literature.

When one compares the book's popularity (apparent in its many reprintings and re-editions throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) to the declining fortunes of British forests, it seems clear that Silva's success has been more literary and textual than practical. But this success came at some cost to the instructional nature of the English georgic poem. The genre's allegiance to instruction had to be negotiated anew, since the new prose was doing so much of the work formerly reserved for verse. The path that natural description follows from Dryden's Georgics through Philips' Cyder to Thomson's The Seasons (even excepting Gay's mock-georgic detour of Wine and Trivia) illustrates a series of generic reconstructions, culminating in Thomson's massively influential descriptive poem. The

tradition is immensely knotty, so in order to secure its place each georgic has to allude to, to imitate, or openly to admit the influence of earlier works. In the case of the period's most popular and most appreciated georgic, John Philips's Cyder, the most influential earlier work is John Milton's Paradise Lost.

Chapter 2

'The Theme as yet unsung':
Languages of Genre and Nature in John Philips's Cyder

> Let Helon rejoice with the Woodpecker—the Lord encourage the propagation of trees!
> For the merciful man is merciful to his beast, and to the trees that give them shelter. (Christopher Smart, Jubilate Agno B13)

The eighteenth century's first georgic poem, and one of the most celebrated throughout the period, was John Philips's Cyder. Appearing in 1708, two years after the death of John Evelyn (whose Silva meant so much to writers who, like Philips, attempted to give formal shape to rural work), and eleven years after Dryden had published his translation of Virgil's Georgics, Philips's poem was an immediate hit. Cyder offers patriotic moral lessons as well as technical instruction on maintaining orchards and producing cider, but its place in literary history is secured rather by its author's career-long dedication to imitating Milton's Paradise Lost. Cyder is a Miltonic (or perhaps mock-Miltonic) Virgilian georgic, and initiated the eighteenth-century vogue for Miltonic diction. This first Augustan georgic borrows the language and prosody of a poem about a distant land, where nature operates in radically different ways, to make its argument about how humans should interact with nature in England. Philips, in short, argues by example that the rhetorical intensity appropriate to Eden is also appropriate to England.

Philips's earlier poems help to illuminate the relationship he saw between Cyder and Paradise Lost, but they also complicate the reader's relationship with Cyder. Dustin Griffin comments that "Nineteenth-century editors could not tell when Philips was in earnest and when in jest, though

they tended to think the effect of Philips's poems—if not the intention—was to render Milton ridiculous or contemptible" (443-44). The Splendid Shilling, Philips's first major work, appeared anonymously in a 1701 miscellany as "In Imitation of Milton," and even when it was published separately the title by which the poem is now known far from dominated the title-page: "Reduced to an italicized headnote, 'The Splendid Shilling' recedes behind a bold roman blazon, 'An Imitation of Milton'" (Cope 21).

Milton is at least as much the subject of The Splendid Shilling as is the narrative of the poet's poverty and his hope to evade imprisonment for debt, and the situation is similar in Cyder. The great difference is that The Splendid Shilling is (if such a thing can ever be) straightforwardly parodic. This is a low, base subject addressed in a style so high as to approach bombast:

> With Looks demure, and silent Pace, a Dunn,
> Horrible Monster! hated by Gods and Men,
> To my aerial Citadel ascends;
> With Vocal Heel thrice thund'ring at my Gates,
> With hideous Accent thrice he calls; I know
> The Voice ill-boding, and the solemn Sound. (36-41)

There is no question about the poem's relative seriousness, so extreme is the disjunction beween style and content: the "aerial Citadel" is an attic garret, for example. Cyder is far more complex, requiring its reader to engage deeply with both its style and its subject matter in order to determine its relative seriousness, as well as to apprehend its instruction.

Cyder's complexity led the poem to an immediate and enduring success. Samuel Johnson in his "Life of Philips," for example, stated that Cyder "was received with loud praises, and continued long to be read, as an

imitation of Virgil's Georgick, which needed not shun the presence of the original" (220). Nevertheless, in spite of its complexity and its immediate critical and popular success, twentieth-century critics have objected to the poem more often than they have praised it. Kevin Cope's essay on Philips argues that the poem's thorough-going allusiveness, partially a result of its being an ambiguously mock poem, "demands a surrender to pleasure, a resolution to follow the prompts and enjoy the surprises in the verse while constructing an open-ended, mock-critical notion of it" (41). Exclusive of Cope's, the highest compliment paid to the poem in recent years is Margaret Doody's, that "Cyder is a readable poem of some importance" (113).

The complaints expressed by readers of Cyder have referred to sections where the language, the high style, might seem to overwhelm the content of the poetry. They argue that Miltonic style is rhetorical overkill when the poem deals with such trivial subjects, that it indicates a failure to understand the registers of poetic language. However, as John Chalker recognized, "Philips' feeling for the orchards of Shropshire can be expressed only through heroic echoes and by association with prelapsarian, paradisal experience" (English 43). Philips considers the language of Milton to be perfectly adapted to speak of Britain because, as Kevin Cope explains, "he [Philips], Milton, and apples, as different as they may be, all spring from the same all-surrounding soil" (Cope 25). The rhetorical intensity of Miltonic language is the only appropriate way to express the ecological intensity of Philips's relation with the countryside. To understand this connection we first need to turn to Paradise Lost.[1]

Satan's reactions to Eden are among the most rhetorically intense descriptive passages in the poem, and I would argue that Satan responds so

strongly to Eden because he is entirely without place. Expelled from Heaven, prohibited from Eden, but not yet confirmed as a resident of Hell, Satan resists the place that has been assigned him, asking Gabriel "Who would not, finding way, break loose from hell, / Though thither doomed?" (4: 889-90). And as Michael puts it when explaining the Great Flood to Adam, "God áttributes to place / No sanctity, if none be thither brought / By men who there frequent, / Or therein dwell" (11: 836-38). Satan, in accordance with Michael's description, rejects the concept of place:

> Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
> And in the lowest deep a lower deep
> Still threat'ning to devour me opens wide,
> To which the hell I suffer seems a heav'n. (4: 75-78)

"Myself am hell"—Satan fears an experience yet worse than this, a place that exceeds definitions of place and the limits of geographic knowledge, and this place is the only one where Satan is permitted to live. It is no wonder that the landscape of Eden has such a powerful effect on him.

When Satan assumes the serpent's form in his successful attempt on Eve's virtue, he almost loses his will to condemn humanity to sin and death, so compelling is the beauty of Eve and her surroundings. He finds her engrossed in her work, alone in a secluded part of her garden redolent with the scent of roses. As he looks on, he feels himself "As one who long in populous city pent, / Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air" (9: 445-46), who can find pleasure only in nearby villages and farms where "each thing met conceives delight" (449). The remarkable beauty of Eve and her garden, as well as the innocence and grace exhibited there, for a time almost make Satan again into Lucifer:

That space the Evil One abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the time remained
Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, or revenge. (463-66)

Satan/Lucifer, though fallen, retains a divine capacity to find beauty in nature, in God's creation. So powerfully does he experience natural beauty that he almost recurs, though briefly, to his own prelapsarian condition. Philips might have found this moment a potent one for his own intention in Cyder to celebrate rural life in heroic strains, because Satan experiences nothing sublime here, nothing awe-inspiring except through its perfection. Satan is led to reject evil by an experience equivalent to a city-dweller's breathing "The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine, / Or dairy" (450-51). The power this scene has over Satan does not derive from Nature's being extraordinary, but instead from the perfection embodied in ordinary being.

Of the two humans in Eden, Eve is the one with the clearer understanding of humanity's relation with the environment, as well as a greater sensitivity to natural beauty. As Diane McColley notices, though, "Adam and Eve are seeking a balance between personal and ecological relations" ("Beneficent" 232). The relationship between Adam and Eve seems oddly to vacillate between equal and unequal, Adam clearly superior in Eve's eyes but Adam's perspective never clearly articulated until after they eat of the Tree of Knowledge. McColley proposes that this indicates a different kind of relationship: "equality by full appreciation of each member, without an ethic of levelling sameness or a loss of the impulse of admiration" (238). This different kind of relationship, which seeks to balance the personal and the ecological, appears in Eve's profession of love for Adam before they retire to

their bower. She describes several natural details that she considers surpassingly beautiful, but subordinate to her love for Adam:

> neither breath of morn when she ascends
> With charm of earliest birds, nor rising sun
> On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flow'r,
> Glist'ring with dew, nor fragrance after showers,
> Nor grateful evening mild, nor silent night,
> With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,
> Or glittering starlight without thee is sweet. (4: 650-56)

No paradisal experience is enough to express Eve's love for Adam, but she demonstrates her worthiness to love by appreciating paradisal experiences. Adam never tries to express his love to her in the same way, and while this has been argued to indicate both Milton's misogyny and Adam's arrogance, it may simply be that Eve is given a more sophisticated "ecological conscience" than is Adam (McColley, "Beneficent" 241). The language available to both of them is filled with natural images, since they are immersed in nature. If Eve has a deeper understanding of her relation with nature, then her language will express and draw on this greater depth.

It is certainly Eve who takes the initiative to work in Eden and maintain Paradise, as when she leaves Adam speaking with Raphael to work in her garden (8: 39-47) or proposes that they work separately in order to achieve greater efficiency (9: 205-55). Crucially, she understands work as fundamental to life in Eden: "to tend plant, herb, and flow'r, / Our pleasant task enjoined" (9: 206-07). When Adam and Eve receive from Michael notice of their expulsion from Eden, Eve remembers with the greatest regret the flowers over which she has laboured,

which I bred up with tender hand
From the first op'ning bud, and gave ye names,
Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, or water from th'ambrosial fount? (11: 276-79)

The intensity with which Eve experiences nature derives from her working so closely with and in nature. Her initial reaction is despair at having to leave the place where she hoped to spend "the respite of that day / That must be mortal to us both" (271-72), but closely following (to her credit, in Michael's opinion) is her concern for the other inhabitants of Eden. When Michael explains in brief their future after their expulsion, he does so in terms of labour:

one bad act with many deeds well done
May'st cover:
. . . . . .
. . . to remove thee I am come,
And send thee from the garden forth to till
The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil. (11: 256-57, 260-62)

This is no curse of labour. Instead labour, and specifically working the land, is the path toward redemption. Only through "many deeds well done" shall this first greatest sin be overcome. And as Eve learns in Eden, even more clearly than does Adam, labour on the land fosters greater appreciation of the environment. If humanity outside Eden is to achieve a state of virtue sufficient to merit redemption, humans will of necessity first achieve a greater appreciation, characterized through rhetorical intensity, akin to the experience of Eden by Eve and Adam and Satan.

The relation between Philips's Cyder and Paradise Lost is far more

complex than most readers have recognized. The opening lines of Cyder are frequently used as evidence of Philips's playful attitude toward Paradise Lost, but they seem most playful when Philips's subject of ecological understanding is considered least important:

> What Soil the Apple loves, what Care is due
> To Orchats, timeliest when to press the Fruits,
> Thy Gift, Pomona, in Miltonian Verse
> Adventrous I presume to sing; of Verse
> Nor skill'd, nor studious: But my Native Soil
> Invites me, and the Theme as yet unsung. (1: 1-6)

The first two lines adequately summarize the poem's content, but Philips goes on to clarify his allusions to Milton. The first line of Paradise Lost mentions "fruit," a word that Philips includes in his second line; Milton asks the "Heavenly Muse" to "sing" (PL 1: 6), while Philips proposes that he himself will "sing" (Cyder 1: 4); Milton calls his work "advent'rous" (PL 1: 13), while Philips may be using the word to refer either to his poem or (more daringly) to himself; and finally Milton's famous claim to write "Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" (PL 1: 16) recurs in Philips's "the Theme as yet unsung" (1: 6). The difference between the Edenic fruit from the Tree of Knowledge and an English cider-apple may be great, but the mock-heroic function of such a comparison does not necessarily belittle the apple. In a sense, the association with Eden expands the apple's significance, especially because no parallel Fall will come from harvesting English orchards.

The most important part of Cyder's opening is unlike anything in Milton's: "my Native Soil / Invites me" (1: 5-6). This is a much more local sentiment than Evelyn's broadly nationalist defence of England. As the poem

progresses, it becomes clear that Philips's "Native Soil" is the soil not of England but of Herefordshire. The appeal to Herefordshire or Ariconium[2] is no common appeal to the muses for artistic assistance; the subject of the poem itself motivates the poem's writing and guarantees the poem's success. The orchards of Philips's home county deserve and prompt the Miltonic and Virgilian treatment he gives them.

Philips died less than a year after the poem's publication, but he died with the knowledge that his poem had been a success. However, as Kevin Cope states, "This smashing popular and critical acclaim for Philips's work belies its critical legacy, a few spotty references in six synoptical studies. Dustin Griffin [in the one recent article before Cope's devoted to Philips, from 1984] reduces Cyder to a second-order recreation of Milton's already nostalgic recreation of the terrestrial paradise" (17-18). Cyder just might be the poem with the most influence in the eighteenth century and the smallest audience in the twentieth; Philips's (mock)humble summary of the poem as "empty Thoughts / Of Apples" (1: 710-11) is common to later critical opinions of the poem. The problem, critics claim, is with Philips's either too indelicate or too delicate handling of supposedly "low" subjects. In other words, Cyder disables respectively the pastoral or neoromantic illusions under which mainstream criticism tends to read Augustan descriptions of nature.

One passage from Cyder frequently called as evidence of Philips's lack of taste, or at least of literary discretion, is his instructions for trapping wasps. John Chalker, for example, considers the section to be "a light-hearted piece of parody," and that "Philips' obvious self-amusement does away with the danger that readers may take the ponderous mock-Miltonisms too seriously" (English 42). Readers consider the poem's literariness rather than its georgic

qualities, and this has led them away from a basic fact: Philips in this passage gives concrete, accurate and valuable technical advice. I quote the passage at length:

> Myriads of Wasps now also clustering hang,
> And drain a spurious Honey from thy Groves,
> Their Winter Food; tho' oft repulst, again
> They rally, undismay'd: but Fraud with ease
> Ensnares the noisom Swarms; let ev'ry Bough
> Bear frequent Vials, pregnant with the Dregs
> Of Moyle, or Mum, or Treacle's viscous Juice:
> They, by th'alluring Odor drawn, in haste
> Fly to the dulcet Cates, and crouding sip
> Their palatable Bane; joyful thou'lt see
> The clammy Surface all o'er-strown with Tribes
> Of greedy Insects, that with fruitless Toil
> Flap filmy Pennons oft, to extricate
> Their Feet, in liquid Shackles bound, 'till Death
> Bereave them of their worthless Souls: Such doom
> Waits Luxury, and lawless Love of Gain! (1: 421-36)[3]

The rhetoric of Chalker's objection in The English Georgic to the passage's being taken seriously is itself interesting; in the four sentences between the end of his quotation of this passage and the end of the next paragraph's first sentence, the words "obvious" or "obviously" occur three times to describe just how easily a reader should recognize the truth of Chalker's understanding. The usual appeal that it is inappropriate to treat low subject matter in high style apparently does not suffice; Chalker feels it necessary to

call his judgements "obvious" to buttress them against a reader either undecided about or resistant to his ideas.

Chalker's objection to the inclusion of such instructions has nothing to do with the place of practical instruction within the georgic, since he defends a parallel passage in Thomson's "Spring" (120-36) against charges that it is either "an unwarranted digression or a misguided piece of ornamentation." The end of his defense of Thomson is strikingly different from his comments on Philips:

> Thomson should be assumed to know what he is about: in the 1744 version he revised this section considerably, but presumably, since he retained it, felt no doubts as to its essential relevance. (124)

Why Thomson but not Philips "should be assumed to know what he is about" is not explained. Chalker provides no explanation for his more delicate discussion of Thomson than Philips, the one relying on the nuance of "presumably" and the other the declarative "obviously." Still, the fact remains that Philips in the passage on the wasps gives concrete technical advice, something that the emphasis on the poem as a literary rather than a didactic georgic has tended to obscure.

The first four-and-a-half lines quoted above, which Chalker does not address, set what I read as the tone for the passage that follows, on practical methods for keeping wasps from destroying the crop. Evelyn offers similar advice in his Kalendarium Hortense, recommending July as the time for "setting the new-invented Cucurbit-Glasses of Beer mingled with Honey, to entice the Wasps, Flies, &c. which waste your Store" (209) and advising that vigilance be continued through August and September. "Fraud," as Philips

puts it, is the only way to control "the noisom Swarms" (1: 424-25). The wasps are not entirely to blame for their actions, because what they take from the orchardist is in fact "Their Winter Food" (423), though the orchardist sees it as "a spurious Honey" (422). The persistence of the wasps is crucial, because it is in their refusal to be kept from their food supply that they pose the greatest danger to the fruit.

Chalker's objection is to the poem's overt moralizing, especially in the word "Luxury"; it may also have something to do with Philips's use of alliteration and consonance ("with fruitless Toil / Flap filmy Pennons oft" [1: 432-33], "Luxury, and lawless Love of Gain" [1: 435]), but Chalker does not say so. I would however argue that the passage's alliteration and its almost onomatopoeic phrases ("viscous Juice" [427], "alluring Odor" [428]) are far from "ponderous," and that Philips uses language approaching the heroic to express the magnitude of the threat facing the orchard and its fruit. The fabular moral contained in the last two lines does complicate the register in which the section is written, though. Chalker is right to comment on the "exaggerated solemnity of the last line and a half," but wrong to argue that this establishes "a sort of retrospective irony" (42), altering the reader's understanding of what had until that point been serious verse. He cannot have it both ways: either the passage is serious, in which case it is possible to establish "retrospective irony," or it is full of the mock-heroic machinery he claims to find there, in which case there is nothing to ironize retrospectively. The problem is that Chalker relies on an assertion that the passage is full of "ponderous mock-Miltonisms" (42), rather than arguing his objection in any detail. Chalker is not alone in his critical stance against the poem, but this is no reason to accept it, especially given his attitude toward The Seasons.

Chalker's complaint against Cyder's handling of insect control directly contradicts his praise of Thomson's in The Seasons, where he feels it possible that "the fight against insects is really the heroic aspect of the farmer's life, and the implications of his fight affect the whole of society," and where he proposes that "the lines ["Spring" 120-36] question whether the normal distinction between heroic and non-heroic is a valid one. Is the soldier the only hero or is the farmer engaged in just as strenuous a battle?" (138). Philips's verse paragraph on the wasps is the fourth in a series of five on "all the Cares to know / Of Gardening" (Cyder 1: 393-94), on birds, pigs, snails, wasps, and worms respectively. The fruit of an orchard represents the fortune of the orchardist; given the patriotic equivalence drawn between agriculture (and silviculture) and the national good in Cyder, as in Silva and a host of related works from the same period, the use of heroic language is scarcely misplaced.

It is telling that most complaints about the style or language of Cyder call attention to exactly this discrepancy between high language and low subject matter, echoing Addison's praise of Virgil:

> He delivers the meanest of his Precepts with a kind of grandeur, he breaks the Clods and tosses the Dung about with an air of gracefulness. (151)

Addison considers that it is the job of "the Prose-writer [to tell] us plainly what is to be done" (147), but that "the Poet must take care not to encumber his Poem with too much Business" (148). Clearly, Addison subordinates the poem's instructional value to its aesthetic value. Philips problematizes Addison's injunctions, describing such activities as dunging and killing wasps with both "a kind of grandeur" and "an air of gracefulness"—but describing

them anyway. He includes "too much Business" for the liking of such readers as M.G. Lloyd Thomas, who complains that Philips's "scientific interests are. . . marked in his work, and preponderate in Cyder not wholly to the advantage of the verse" (xiii).

John Barrell also objects to georgic writing, but in complicated ways that allow him to blame the eighteenth century for what may be his own reading habits:

> in the early eighteenth century, Georgic is still evidently embarrassed by the freedom permitted to it of describing mean tasks in detail. . . . Thus much early eighteenth-century Georgic is written as an exercise of style. . . . (Equal, Wide Survey 90)

Barrell goes on to comment that John Dyer in The Fleece succeeded at writing georgic because he managed to avoid "the epic circumlocution, the coy mock heroic, in which all earlier writers of Georgic couch their more practical passages" (95). In discussing Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," Barrell refers to "those dirty jobs which many eighteenth-century readers thought too ignoble to be described in the elevated language of poetry" ("Golden Age of Labour" 181). At no point in either of these texts does Barrell offer evidence of eighteenth-century responses to the writing he refers to, nor even of the "epic circumlocution" or "coy mock heroic" that in his reading characterizes eighteenth-century georgic verse. That he only asserts this as what is in his view a truism, but does not argue it, means that his references to poems "describing mean tasks in detail" is left to resonate, unresolved. He does not address those textual moments, such as Philips's description of wasps, that might problematize his interpretation.

Chalker recognizes that because Cyder is a georgic poem, it will accordingly deal with subjects not often met with in more polite verse. His emphasis on such impolite subjects, however, overwhelms his otherwise useful comments:

> Philips is interested in dunging; he is also interested in the literary problem of how to discuss dunging in an elevated poem. A satisfactory solution of the problem, which involves a measure of ironical detachment, the ability of the poet to stand aside and take pleasure in his own skill, gives intellectual pleasure. (41)

In other words, the reader must recognize and share "the author's own sense of achievement, a mutual and slightly conspiratorial delight in having overcome an intransigent problem" (41). But there is no "problem" with Cyder's discussion of dunging, certainly not an intransigent one. Dunging is important to the didactic intent of any agricultural georgic, just as Dryden thought that detailed nautical description was important to Annus Mirabilis, and as such it has to be discussed by Philips. The "problem" identified by Chalker, how to describe something effectively, plays a part in all poetic endeavours. It is not confined to the low subject matter of wasp-bait and dunging, though it becomes clearest there. The elevated style of the rest of Cyder, the miltonisms variously celebrated and condemned by its nearly three centuries of readers, could not simply be put aside when the poem came to its moments of truth. Evelyn does not give advice on wasp infestations in Pomona, his prose work on cider; by giving it himself, Philips proves himself a true georgic poet. He further proves his georgic qualifications when he gives advice not included in either Dryden's translation of the Georgics or

Evelyn's Silva, both of which also discuss grafting, on the use of clay to secure grafts within their new hosts (1: 280-82)—but readers have not experienced difficulty with that section of the poem, so have not commented on it. Cope has referred to it, but he uses the discussion of grafting as a metaphor for Philips's literary method (33-34).

Another problem with Cyder that has led to the poem's declining popularity, according to Cope, is that Philips relies too heavily on the reader in the poem: "By refusing to say explicitly whether a poem like Cyder is to be taken seriously, comically, both, or neither, Philips conditions the effect of his genre on an array of extra-literary, reader-relevant factors" (39). The reader, Cope argues forcefully, is given responsibility for controlling the poem through the complex interplay of style and content, of literary allusion and technical instruction; the reader's responses confirm the poem's generic affiliations, but those affiliations are entirely extra-textual. It seems clear that the poem is an imitation of Virgil's Georgics, but that means only that it is either a georgic or a mock-georgic, and imitations can be travesties as well as celebrations, and even both at once. According to Cope, "Mock-heroic works acquire an unusual vitality and autonomy, for works that only spoof or imitate Virgil never attain Virgilian authority, but works whose natures are contingent, which sometimes heed Virgil but sometimes don't, can absorb, manipulate, escape, and even transcend the Mantuan's—or Milton's—influence" (39). Readers unable to determine securely their own responses to this dizzying set of allusive possibilities, in both style and content, are unable to read the poem with full reference to those allusions and that allusiveness; the poem is for such a reader barely worth reading, because the reader is unable to sustain the poem's generic being.

Part of this lack of success that readers have experienced in reading Cyder has to do with critical attention to the parodic; satire has long been a popular genre in criticism of the Augustan period, but the mock-heroic, unless it is cast as a satire (like Pope's Rape of the Lock), has not been so closely or so often studied. The difficulty of the mock-heroic, of the parodic, has reduced the number of its critics:

> The critical legacy of mock-heroic poetry is nearly a vacuum—a mock-blank dotted with occasional semi-satiric commentaries. Unable to sustain too lofty a song, this mode bars readers and critics from obtaining the sense of closure that so forthrightly derivative a poetry invites. (Cope 41)

The love for Cyder and for Philips's poetry more generally that Cope confesses has to do with a postmodern fascination with pastiche and parody in all their forms. Postmodern cultural literacy is theorized as an enabling force encouraging the reader to interpret and reinterpret texts, to insert his or her own reading consciousness into the text as an additional author. It thus makes a great deal of sense that a postmodern reader would enjoy Philips's poetry, especially if that reader (like Cope) were nearly as well versed in Milton and Philips as was Philips himself. The usual objection to postmodern literary practices therefore applies equally to Cope: the text of Cyder is reduced to a set of literary references, denying the sense of place, specifically of Britain and Herefordshire, that along with the Augustan vogue for Milton provoked the poem in the first place.

Cope's manifestly Barthesian attitude to Philips's poetry is strikingly iconoclastic compared to other criticism, of both Philips and the Augustan georgic. Barthes's comments on textual pleasure are closely related to Cope's

attitude to Cyder, that a text of pleasure "never succumbs to the good conscience (and bad faith) of parody (of castrating laughter, of 'the comical that makes us laugh')" (Barthes 9). Even more clearly applicable is Barthes's description of the text of bliss:

> This text is outside pleasure, outside criticism, unless it is reached through another text of bliss: you cannot speak "on" such a text, you can only speak "in" it, in its fashion, enter into a desperate plagiarism. . . . (22)

Philips's appeal to generic instability in his poems is not unlike Barthes's claim that the text of bliss "destroys utterly, to the point of contradiction, its own discursive category, its sociolinguistic reference (its 'genre')" (30). The "desperate plagiarism" Barthes refers to applies equally to Cope and to Philips; just as Philips imitates Milton, seeking to speak in his fashion, so does Cope try to speak in Philips's fashion, seeking to create his own "text of bliss" that allows understanding of Philips's poem.

Criticism earlier than Cope's had such difficulty with Philips's use of language and (mock-)Miltonic style that it suppressed the place of the extra-literary world in Cyder, even more than in Philips's other, more purely humorous poems. Though Cope reads Philips's works as almost entirely intertextual, at least he celebrates them. The twentieth century's first major notice of Cyder came in M.G. Lloyd Thomas's introduction to her edition of Philips's poems. This is often a biased source—a "home crowd," so to speak—but Lloyd Thomas pulls no punches in her summary of Philips: "Cyder, as the title suggests, has not the intrinsic value of The Seasons, and takes precedence of it only historically: Philips's work is imitative and not original in character. . ." (ix). Lloyd Thomas admits that Philips is a skilled

parodist, but divides his parodies from his other poetry. She goes on to damn him with very faint praise indeed, commenting that "One of the curious features of Philips's seriously intended verse is that it is often least unsuccessful where it is most imitative and reminiscent" (xli), that his writing is at its worst "when Philips is dealing with the subject of his poem, whilst he is always somewhat less unfortunate in his digressions" (xli, note 2), and that "on the rare occasions when Philips approaches poetry, he is still Miltonic" (xlii). A collected edition of an author's works often occasions some praise of that author's successes, though it rarely excludes his or her failings entirely. Philips, however, comes out very badly in Lloyd Thomas's introduction.

Perhaps the most sensitive appraisal of Philips's Cyder this century has been Dwight Durling's. It takes up only a few paragraphs, all too short, in his Georgic Tradition in English Poetry (1935). Durling calls attention to Philips's limitations as a poet, but praises him for his talents:

> It is ingenious pastiche, often closer to Vergil than the neo-Latin poets were. Philips's pleasure in composing it was partly that of a scholar delighting in ingeniously adapting the themes of an admired original into terms of native conditions. The pleasure he hoped to arouse in readers was partly in the recognition of this ingenuity. Cyder is often unreadable today for people who can only regard with wonder the high praise it once had. They do not look for this kind of minor merit lying in ingenuity of adaptation. (36)

Durling does allow that Philips's miltonisms are "often turgid, euphemistic, and circumlocutory" (105), but he says this with reference to Thomson's

Seasons as well. The balance with which he approaches Cyder is striking among twentieth-century readers of the poem. The key phrase in the above quotation is "ingeniously adapting the themes of an admired original into terms of native conditions." Many readers, over the last century and a half, have denied or failed to recognize the poem's ingenuity, but just as many have ignored or glossed over the details of "native conditions" that occupy Philips's attention throughout. As Samuel Johnson commented, Cyder "may be given this peculiar praise, that it is grounded in truth; that the precepts which it contains are exact and just; and that it is therefore, at once, a book of entertainment and science" (224). Cyder is an imitation of Virgil's Georgics, certainly, and a parodic imitation of Miltonic style, but it is also a poem that insightfully describes a patriot's England, especially Herefordshire and its orchards.

Kevin Cope's interest in Cyder derives from his interest in postmodern reading patterns, translated or extended into methods for reading the mock-heroic; he comments that Cyder is "a poem in which readers are asked to fuse the serious with the ridiculous in order to produce the parodic" (18), "the only authorized reaction being vertigo over the defeat of proscriptive readings" (37). There are two main reasons for my love for Cyder, apart from that responsible for Cope's: Philips's passion for language, for the rhythms and melodies and sounds of words; and his passion for the Herefordshire countryside, his sense of place inherent in his attention to technical details of both poetry and cider-making. Criticism of Philips, at least until Cope's recent article, has considered his Miltonic style to have been produced by a lack of originality encouraged by his literary taste for Milton. I would argue instead that, in Cyder at least, Philips saw Miltonic language and style as the only way

to illustrate the beauty of his countryside; the language appropriate to Eden is also appropriate to Herefordshire. His style honours Herefordshire for its beauty as well as Milton for his vision. It is not just a means of (and certainly not an impediment to) expression.

Philips praises Herefordshire extravagantly, mixing the aesthetic and the utilitarian in an effort to raise his county above trivial considerations:

> The Meadows here, with bat'ning Ooze enrich'd,
> Give Spirit to the Grass; three cubits high
> The jointed Herbage shoots; th'unfallow'd Glebe
> Yearly o'ercomes the Granaries with Store
> Of Golden Wheat, the Strength of Human Life. (1: 547-51)

Even Herefordshire's groundwater ("Bat'ning Ooze") takes an active role in the cultivation of harvests. Fields must normally be left fallow occasionally to encourage continued success with the harvest, but in Herefordshire the soil is productive enough to be always "unfallow'd." It is no wonder that the grass, in conditions of such plenitude, can achieve the height (heroic in human terms) of "three cubits." Philips goes on to enumerate some specifically economic details of the county's cultivation:

> Apples of Price, and plenteous Sheaves of Corn,
> Oft interlac'd occur, and both imbibe
> Fitting congenial Juice; so rich the Soil,
> So much does fructuous Moisture o'er-abound! (1: 559-61)

In the first two lines here Philips emphasizes the commercial strength of Herefordshire, obliquely referring to the practice of planting grain between the rows of trees in an orchard. The last two phrases, though, describing the soil and the "fructuous Moisture" respectively, are less clearly economic, and

the "congenial" nature of the soil's moisture is similarly ambiguous.

Philips goes on to describe the landscape in labour-effacing, almost pastoral terms, in a passage notable for the uncertainty of whether the view is of the hills or from them. He seems here almost to digress from his georgic intent:

> Nor are the Hills unamiable, whose Tops
> To Heav'n aspire, affording Prospect sweet
> To Human Ken; nor at their Feet the Vales
> Descending gently, where the lowing Herd
> Chews verd'rous Pasture; nor the yellow Fields
> Gaily' enterchang'd, with rich Variety
> Pleasing, as when an Emerald green, enchas'd
> In flamy Gold, from the bright Mass acquires
> A nobler Hue, more delicate to Sight. (1: 563-71)

The phrase "nobler Hue," though still clearly predicated on sight and therefore assimilable to aesthetic coding, hints at a valuation other than the purely aesthetic; similarly, the almost heraldic qualities of the passage, particularly the comparison of the scene's colours to those of emeralds set in gold, help to obscure the importance of labour in Herefordshire and therefore distinguish the passage's motives from economics. Labour is only explicitly invisible, however. The "yellow Fields" got that way because someone has harvested them in years past, and has sown grain in them. The "verd'rous Pasture" is less clearly the product of labour, since there are open spaces in England of uncertain but ancient origin. These probably are the effect from long-established grazing patterns,[4] but the "lowing Herd" definitely requires human care. Still, the landscape is visibly empty of people, but only until

Philips comes to consider it more closely.

Philips eventually mentions the forests of Herefordshire, and does so in entirely non-pastoral terms. The forest is a place

> whence the Hearth is fed
> With copious Fuel; whence the sturdy Oak,
> A Prince's Refuge once, th'æternal Guard
> Of England's Throne, by sweating Peasants fell'd,
> Stems the vast Main, and bears tremendous War
> To distant Nations, or with Sov'ran Sway
> Awes the divided World to Peace and Love. (1: 573-79)

The economics of timber management can hardly be put more clearly than Philips puts them in this passage. Pope in Windsor-Forest and the "Epistle to Burlington" celebrates the use of timber for ship-building, but he does not mention the use of forest for fuel. Common-rights of the time, in places where they had not yet been extinguished by enclosure, permitted the rural poor to gather dead wood for fuel, so long as it was not cut from a standing tree but pulled by hook or by crook. Philips's references to the effect of Britain's ships are relatively conventional, though the comment that Britain "with Sov'ran Sway / Awes the divided World to Peace and Love" is an early example of the idea of the Royal Navy as an international police force, in much the same way that the United Nations and (less legitimately) the United States see themselves at the end of the twentieth century. What is striking about the passage is the inclusion of the effects of labour, not just the action; Philips's "sweating Peasants" are without parallel in Augustan poetry of that time, re-appearing later on in Gay's satirized mock-peasants in The Shepherd's Week (1713) and the proletarian anti-pastoral descriptions of work

in Stephen Duck's The Thresher's Labour (1730), Robert Tatersal's The Bricklayer's Labours (1734), and Mary Collier's The Woman's Labour (1739).

Immediately before instructing his readers about the final preparations before cider can at last be made, assuming the orchard's harvest has survived the many calamities that may befall it, Philips celebrates Herefordshire as a landscape which looks pastoral:

> English Plains
> Blush with pomaceous Harvest, breathing Sweets.
> O let me now, when the kind early Dew
> Unlocks th'embosom'd Odors, walk among
> The well rang'd Files of Trees, whose full-ag'd Store
> Diffuse Ambrosial Steams, than Myrrh, or Nard
> More grateful, or perfuming flow'ry Beane!
> Soft whisp'ring Airs, and the Larks mattin Song
> Then woo to musing, and becalm the Mind
> Perplex'd with irksome Thoughts. (2: 57-66)

The only traces of labour in this passage are the word "Harvest" and the implication that someone "well rang'd" the trees that make up the orchard; the "me" in this passage is not in the orchard for purposes of work. The walking here is reminiscent of that in Milton's "L'Allegro," a poem more pastoral than georgic. However, by the last few weeks before harvest time, little work remains to be done in an orchard except for maintaining wasp-traps and picking up fallen fruit. It may also be important that this scene takes place in very early morning, before the labourers arrive to begin their work. The apparent freedom from labour here is not entirely unnatural to an orchard; a shepherd's life is one of constant vigilance, but an orchardist's is

one of brief but infrequent bursts of intense activity, bridged by more or less casual attention to the progress of the harvest.

Before cider can be made, several tasks need to be performed. A tension exists in this didactic passage, reflecting the different positions that can be occupied by the reader of Cyder and by an orchardist. The question arises as to how much labour the reader will actually perform, but it is a question not resolved by Philips:

> disburthen thou thy sapless Wood
> Of its rich progeny; the turgid Fruit
> Abounds with mellow Liquor; now exhort
> Thy Hinds to exercise the pointed Steel
> On the hard Rock, and give a wheely Form
> To the expected Grinder: Now prepare
> Materials for thy Mill, a sturdy Post
> Cylindric, to support the Grinder's Weight
> Excessive, and a flexile Sallow' entrench'd,
> Rounding, capacious of the juicy Hord.
> .....
> Shave the Goat's shaggy Beard, least thou too late,
> In vain should'st seek a Strainer, to dispart
> The husky, terrene Dregs, from purer Must. (2: 76-85, 88-90)

The verse paragraph concludes with the advice that the horse assigned to turn the mill should be quite old, and incapable of other tasks, because such a horse will be "pleas'd to find his Age / Declining, not unuseful to his Lord" (2: 98-99). As so often in discussions of business management, the division of labour is unclear in the passage: the orchardist picks apples, cuts and prepares

the post for the wheel, and shaves a goat's beard, but assigns several "Hinds" (apparently in the orchardist's employ) to make the mill-stone. Still, the details of labour are set out more clearly here than they are even in John Evelyn's Pomona, the period's primary instructional text on making cider.

The morality of making cider is also a part of Philips's instruction, and informs his insistence on purity:

> But this I warn thee, and shall always warn,
> No heterogeneous Mixtures use, as some
> With watry Turneps have debas'd their Wines,
> Too frugal. . . . (2: 136-39)

Philips neglects to forbid the addition of bits of rotten meat to the mixture, which was sometimes done to sweeten the brew,[5] but his emphasis on the purity of Herefordshire cider is clear enough. He further explains that "Delicious Draughts" (202) can be made from pressing currants, raspberries, quinces, plums, cherries, mulberries, or honeycomb (201-07). He even gives advice for making "Potables" (217) in England from the sap of birch-trees and from cowslips (208-22), and mentions diverse drinks made in other countries from what he clearly sees as strange but admirable ingredients (223-81). Occasionally Philips mentions that in different areas a cider-maker should follow slightly different procedures (such as in Devon, allegedly the only place whose cider improves when fermented over heat), but his focus is on Herefordshire. The poem's opening injunction—"My Native Soil / Invites me"—maintains the poem's focus through its occasional but infrequent excursions to other places.

The patriotism of Philips's focus extends to recounting stories of ciders that counterfeit "The Spanish Product" (2: 300-01, presumably sherry) as well

as "The sparking Nectar of Champaigne" (302), and one with which

> A German oft has swill'd his Throat, and sworn,
> Deluded, that Imperial Rhine bestow'd
> The generous Rummer, whilst the Owner pleas'd,
> Laughs inly at his Guests, thus entertain'd
> With Foreign Vintage from his Cyder-Cask. (302-07)

It goes without saying that Philips does not mention foreign prowess at cider-making, in Normandy for example. From this point onward, after a short passage on the best method for separating cider from the dregs (315-28) and one describing the making of glass bottles for the cider (333-43), Philips's poem becomes a relatively conventional patriotic rural panegyric. From a long and detailed description of the post-decanting festivities, including a discussion of the ill effects of too much drink (rare in such poems),[6] Philips modulates into a celebration of British history, especially of the monarchy. Interestingly, he absolves Herefordshire entirely from blame for the 1649 regicide:

> Yet was the Cyder-Land unstain'd with Guilt;
> The Cyder-Land, obsequious still to Thrones,
> Abhorr'd such base, disloyal Deeds, and all
> Her Pruning-hooks extended into Swords,
> Undaunted, to assert the trampled Rights
> Of Monarchy. (2: 514-19)

The poem ends with an imperialist dream-vision, in which through all parts of the empire, all across the world, "Silurian Cyder borne / Shall please all Tasts, and triumph o'er the Vine" (2: 668-69). Philips's history of England, the narrative of great men and women, kings and queens, arrives inevitably at this point: the acknowledged perfection of English cider.

The practical details of cider's material production in Herefordshire are Philips's ostensible subject matter in Cyder, but he embeds them in a far-ranging consideration of the county's nature, aesthetic beauty, political reliability, and worth to the nation. Cyder celebrates landscape as well as economics, and at the same time. Cyder connects the county's privileged economic and aesthetic positions at the level of nationalism, as Virgil did in his Georgics. Augustan georgic ecology owes much to Philips's reading of Milton, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of human relations with nature. Philips like Milton sees no way and no need to limit relations to only a single dimension. Philips's Herefordshire is an extremely complex system; description of one aspect of relation to the land leads Philips digressively to another, and he eventually finds it necessary to connect the different ways of seeing the countryside. Augustan georgic ecology regards aesthetics, economics, and any other mode of perception as indivisibly part of the same structure. The immense task that this sets a poet, however, leads throughout the century to a wide variety of results, and the next chapter will discuss three examples of the georgic: Alexander Pope's Windsor-Forest, Anne Irwin's Castle-Howard, and Robert Dodsley's Agriculture.

Chapter 3

Some Versions of Augustan Georgic

Poetry without moralizing is but the blossom of a fruit tree.

(William Shenstone, "Prefatory Essay on Elegy")[1]

As I argued in Chapter 1 above, the role of georgic verse as a simultaneously instructional and literary mode of writing was seriously challenged late in the seventeenth century by the increasing respect accorded to prose written by the practitioners of "the new science," including John Evelyn and the members of the Royal Society. The rendering in verse of either experimental or practical knowledge was not defeated by the new writing, but the georgic was faced with the difficult task of re-imagining its purpose in order to retain its relevance in the eighteenth century.

William Youngren provides a second theory to explain the georgic's liminal condition by explaining that the aesthetic theory informing the georgic lost its currency in the first two decades of the century. Addison evolved his associationist ideas of poetry somewhere around 1697, four years after he had written his essay on the Georgics; he expressed those ideas most fully in a series of 1712 Spectator papers on the "pleasures of the imagination." After about 1720, Youngren argues, the idea of poetry's purpose changed dramatically, and the terms used to argue "poetry's superiority as a moral teacher . . . quite suddenly vanished" (267). In the period's own discussions of poetry, "no serious eighteenth-century critic or aesthetician . . . ever returned to the older way of talking" about poetry (282). Youngren implies that authors who followed Addison's advice from the earlier essay, as georgic writers did, were following a theoretical formulation

which mainstream eighteenth-century poetic and aesthetic practice rapidly taught readers to consider obsolete, and argues forcefully that Restoration literature has more in common with Renaissance than Augustan literature. The radical nature of Addison's changing ideas means that the eighteenth-century georgics are either obsolete Restoration texts, or theoretically divided against themselves.

In either case, if Youngren is correct, it is no wonder that criticism has ignored or insulted the Augustan georgics more often than it has discussed them at any length. James Thomson's The Seasons (which I discuss in the following chapter) has received an uncommon amount of attention, though it has long been more often mentioned than discussed, more often recommended than read. That poem owes part of its success to its closer ties to Addisonian aesthetics, but it owes much of it simply to its subject matter. As J. Logie Robertson hyperbolically commented in the introduction to his 1908 Oxford Standard Authors edition of Thomson's Poetic Works, "A love for nature is synonymous with a love for Thomson" (xi). And the late Augustan period was a time when the reading public was becoming more open in their expression of "love for nature."

The Seasons remains more accessible because of the changing preoccupations of landscape description. Moralized landscape provided one means to satisfy the georgic need for instruction, and description developed from this emphasis as an end in itself, allowing the georgic to escape its genre's perceived limitations. The idea of georgic transition is a popular one, but no proposed date has been broadly accepted; Anthony Low, for example, places the shift in the mid-seventeenth century in his book The Georgic Revolution, while John Murdoch places it in the Romantic period in his

article "The Landscape of Labour: Transformations of the Georgic." There is of course no reason that generic qualities cannot shift in more than one period—indeed genre is not a stable category—but in this chapter I will propose that the Augustan period's own georgic transition has to do with the period's changing relation with the landscape.

The term "georgic" is generally understood to refer to a form of didactic poetry, specifically instructional in intent, that flourished in eighteenth-century England. Translations of Virgil's Georgics appeared occasionally in the seventeenth century, but it was the publication of Dryden's 1697 version, somewhere between translation and imitation, that solidified the georgic's position in the nation's literary consciousness. In the now classic phrase of Humphrey Milford, it was Dryden's translation in which "Virgil entered the eighteenth century an English citizen" (qtd. in Donald Johnson 94). However, because the genre emphasizes didacticism, the georgics have attracted fewer readers in recent years than the period's other literature, much of which is more amenable to alternative readings. John Chalker memorably comments, not wholly disapproving of such an attitude, that georgics "are generally assumed to be faintly absurd and sterile off-shoots of Augustan orthodoxy" (1). The Seasons is read more often than John Philips's Cyder, but there are important reasons why The Seasons can be so easily, if mistakenly, severed from the georgic line.

Still, the genre is much less focussed on instruction than its mostly dismissive critics imply. Donald Johnson explains that "Dryden recognized the Georgics as an essentially moral work, one aimed at influencing man's attitudes toward the right way to live, not an agricultural treatise designed to revolutionize Italian farming" (95). Marie Loretto Lilly describes Virgil as "a

good husbandman, and a wise giver of advice, but over and above everything a great poet" (12); that is, "he is not concerned to make his teachings practical" (17), though they have been used practically. Lilly goes on to recount persuasive anecdotal evidence to show that the Georgics were not read as technical instruction:

> at the beginning of the eighteenth century the alternation of crops was just becoming a common practice in England, a great improvement upon the previous and common usage of exhausting the land and letting it recover its strength by lying fallow. In Georg. I, 7-83, this improved system had been recommended by Vergil eighteen centuries before. (18)

The georgic now has the reputation of an instructional pamphlet, but Virgil's information was ignored in England for centuries even while his poem remained popular for its literary merit. While this inattention to Virgil's information says little good about the perceptiveness of the poem's readers, it makes it clear that the poem was admired for its artistry rather than for its instruction. Even though instructional verse appeared throughout the eighteenth century, like John Armstrong's 1744 Art of Preserving Health, pure didacticism never dominated the genre.

Whatever the reason for the georgic's marginal position, though, twentieth-century critics have made careers from proving just why the Augustan georgics deserve their marginality. In a passage already partially quoted above John Chalker, author of an important study of the genre, comments with reference to Cyder and John Dyer's The Fleece that georgics "are generally assumed to be faintly absurd and sterile off-shoots of Augustan orthodoxy. So, in a sense, they are. Nobody can well pretend that these

particular poems, however fascinating they may be to the antiquarian, will ever be resurrected as 'live' literature" (1). James Tierney, editor of Robert Dodsley's correspondence, calls Dodsley's 1753 georgic Agriculture "eighty-eight pages of tedious blank verse" (11). M.G. Lloyd Thomas, editor of The Poems of John Philips, states that Philips's 1708 georgic Cyder "has a certain historical value, if (as the phrase too often implies), little other interest" (xl).[2] However, none of these writers offers a persuasive reason why the georgic was so important to the Augustan period, or why the georgic assumed so many different forms. With reference to Alexander Pope's Windsor-Forest (1714), Anne Irwin's Castle-Howard (1732),[3] and Robert Dodsley's Agriculture (1753; also known as Public Virtue),[4] I argue in this chapter that the georgic's variety permitted but also derived from the variety of available ideas about the environment, and further that changes in the physical environment led poets continually to reinvent the georgic in an attempt to reclaim the dream of a healthy relationship with nature.

Critical works on ideas of nature, such as Keith Thomas's influential Man and the Natural World, tend to focus on the strands of utilitarianism and aesthetic appreciation, which Thomas calls a "non-utilitarian attitude to the natural world" (240); such criticism does not address the potential uses to which aesthetic judgements and theories might be put. The two terms are considered opposites, but they are considered opposites that are the only options available. The opening couplet of Pope's Windsor-Forest, however, a poem often divided between the utilitarian and aesthetic camps, casts in doubt the critically constructed opposition; the forests are "At once the Monarch's and the Muse's seats" (2). Ownership of the forest environment ("Thy Forests, Windsor!" [1]) is a reciprocal arrangement, involving far more

than just a purely economic or purely aesthetic understanding of the land.

The genre of Windsor-Forest is still contested. It has been considered a locodescriptive poem with an overabundance of political elements; a georgic with too little specific instruction (but still georgic enough to merit a place in most studies of the genre); and, in Robert Cummings's opinion, a silva, "essentially a poem of discontinuous arguments, one whose parts do not relate to each other" (66).[5] Cummings goes so far as to hold that Windsor-Forest cannot be a descriptive poem because of "its obvious enough discrepancies as one" (66), and that because "georgic poetry is nothing if not didactic and prescriptive. . . , [n]o one wants to assert that of Windsor-Forest" (73). The silva, as Cummings defines it with the authority of Statius, Politian, and Scaliger, operates through participating in multiple generic and cultural discourses, as does the georgic. The difference is that the georgic bends the discourses (political, economic, agricultural, and so on) to a single didactic aim, while the silva has no such dominant purpose.

The problem of definition does not simply affect the ongoing academic turf war of genre theory. This has more vigour in eighteenth-century studies than in criticism of most other periods, but I do not propose to settle the question of this poem's genre. The frequency with which the poem has been ascribed to the georgic tradition, at the time of its publication and many times since, makes it de facto an important influence on that tradition; whether or not it might best be considered a classical georgic may be irrelevant insofar as subsequent versions of the georgic considered Windsor-Forest as a model and forebear. The early and important place this poem occupies in Augustan landscape description means that assigning this one poem to a different genre would lead critics to a different understanding of subsequent landscape

description and attitudes toward the environment, but doing so would also falsify the relationship later writers saw between their own writing and the literary tradition.

The poem is Pope's application to join the quasi-aristocratic fellowship of British poets, particularly of those other dwellers in the Thames Valley, Denham and Cowley (259-82). It thus makes some sense that Pope would georgically place the products of the muses in the same category as he would place products of England's national economy. Profits both cultural and economic can accrue to an acknowledged poetic talent, as well as to the ruler of a wealthy nation. Commercial activity of a specifically nationalist kind is crucial to Windsor-Forest, but wealth is less important than the ongoing process of international capitalism, supported in England's case by the military:

> Let India boast her Plants, nor envy we
> The weeping Amber or the balmy Tree,
> While by our Oaks the precious Loads are born,
> And Realms commanded which those Trees adorn. (29-32)

Components of an exotic natural scene are the specific objects of wealth, but as Pope recognizes, British wealth is generated through trade by domestic oaks that have been converted into ships both commercial and military. India is figured as a place of beauty ("which those Trees adorn"), but its beauty is less valuable than the material wealth represented by that beauty. Wealth is in turn judged to be less valuable than the ability granted by British oaks to dominate international trade in the material objects of beauty.

When Pope comes to address the Thames, though, his strictly national focus leads him to complicate slightly his emphasis on material value:

Thou too, great Father of the British Floods!
With joyful Pride survey'st our lofty Woods,
Where tow'ring Oaks their growing Honours rear,
And future Navies on thy Shores appear. (219-22)

The emphasis is clearly on the military value of the trees, in their "growing Honours" and their role as "future Navies," but Pope also admits the possibility of seeing "With joyful Pride . . . our lofty Woods," not necessarily an economic mode of perception. If the country's worth appears in more than just its economic success, as Pope argues it does, then stating the value of a country's environment may not be to insist on its economic potential. The nationalist comparisons which follow—"No Seas so rich, so gay no Banks appear, / No Lake so gentle, and no Spring so clear" (225-26)—again encourage the possibility of looking at nature proprietorially without looking commercially.

Ralph Cohen has argued persuasively that the Augustan period's achievement in the couplet form, following Denham's ground-breaking example in "Cooper's-Hill," derived from, led to the further development of, and increased the profile of dualist thinking. The couplet form promotes such rhetorical techniques as zeugma and chiasmus, and readers of Pope quite correctly identify as a characteristic of his works a balance in contrast founded on the Augustan heroic couplet's dualist tendencies. Such famous phrases from The Rape of the Lock as the description of Queen Anne as a woman who does "sometimes Counsel take—and sometimes Tea" (3.8), or the reference to women's equal sadness "When Husbands or when Lap-dogs breathe their last" (3.158), rely on exactly the dualist writing emphasized for good reason by readers like Cohen.

In Windsor-Forest, though, in spite of the poet's broad reliance on Denham's example, Pope's heroic couplets do not conform to the dualist model. As Robert Cummings recognizes, "Pope's invoking Denham, far from pointing to a congruity of their intentions, more likely marks a contrast—and that more aggressively than any merely generic properties might have demanded" (69). The poem's apparently dualistic second verse paragraph in particular, describing the landscape at Windsor, departs unexpectedly from the pattern of binaries in balance and contrast:

> Not Chaos-like together crush'd and bruis'd,
> But as the World, harmoniously confus'd:
> Where Order in Variety we see,
> And where, tho' all things differ, all agree. (13-16)

Pope relies on the usual dualist constructions ("Chaos" and "the World," "differ" and "agree"), but the effect is far less binary than the lines quoted above from The Rape of the Lock. While this is often cited as an example of concordia discors, order found in disorder, Robert Cummings perceives that "what he [Pope] claims to discover in Windsor Forest is not that 'because all things differ, all agree,' but that 'tho' all things differ, all agree" (68). Opposition does not enable agreement here; agreement occurs in spite of opposition. Pope's "harmoniously confus'd" natural scene appears in phrases harmoniously confusing the comfortable oppositions of the heroic couplet, changing the way that his readers experience the Windsor landscape.

As Cohen describes it, the quintessential feature of the Augustan couplet is its pairing of terms. It is not an entirely unfair caricature that sees Pope making a point every twenty syllables, and it is this that makes his representation of landscape in Windsor-Forest so interesting:

Here waving Groves a checquer'd Scene display,
And part admit and part exclude the Day;
As some coy Nymph her Lover's warm Address
Nor quite indulges, nor can quite repress. (17-20)

Pope's focus here on a kind of a hiatus in action, on the intermingling and interaction of elements to comprise a larger entity ("a checquer'd Scene"), contrasts the dualist tendencies of the heroic couplet. The direct equation of the "waving Groves" and the "coy Nymph," as well as the two lines each with doubled verb constructions, all indicate Pope's technical prowess in the binaristic mode of perception that allows readers to interpret as oppositional his earlier ascription of nature to "the Monarch" or "the Muse" (2). However, the idea of a nature "harmoniously confus'd," like that of the joint ownership implied in "At once the Monarch's and the Muse's seats," jars with Augustan poetry's reputation as the seat of utilitarian principles, as well as Pope's reputation as a proponent of economic development that derives in part from his use of the heroic couplet.

This is not to say, of course, that the economic value of nature is unimportant to Pope. Commercial and military uses of oaks determine landscape description in Windsor-Forest. Margaret Doody claims that later in his poetic career, "Pope took a much more critical and angry look at Whig beliefs and at the politics of mercantilism" (15), in the imitations of Horace, for example, in which he contrasted a nostalgic ideal of closeness to the land with modern luxury and decadence. However, this later "more critical and angry look" did not significantly alter his attitude toward the treed English landscape. As late as the 1731 "Epistle to Burlington," a nobleman's virtue derives from his being a landowner

Whose rising Forests, not for pride or show,
But future Buildings, future Navies grow:
Let his plantations stretch from down to down,
First shade a Country, and then raise a Town. (187-90)

Fifteen years after "Windsor-Forest," economics still pre-empt and determine aesthetic appreciation. Pope's is a controlled, managed landscape, though he holds a slightly different idea about gardening: "In all, let Nature never be forgot" ("Epistle to Burlington" 50). The word "nature," as Raymond Williams demonstrated in his book Keywords, is one of the most complex in the English language, in part because England's landscape has been managed continuously for agricultural and silvicultural purposes for roughly six thousand years (Marren 45). In Windsor-Forest, Pope expresses this complexity as the meeting of disparate impulses, of many different ideas of environment, and of many different ideas of land use. The poem's conclusion proposes no resolution to these disparate elements, no way to accommodate them to a single way of thinking, but the poem's distinctive variation on the heroic couplet and its digressive mode—either georgic or silvan—demonstrates that it is however possible to bring them together.

Like Pope's Windsor-Forest, Anne Ingram, Lady Irwin's Castle-Howard emphasizes the complexity of perception as well as the complexity of human relations to the land. Her focus on gardening and the estate may lead her reader to place Castle-Howard in the country-house tradition as a necessary stage between, for example, Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton-House" and William Mason's The English Garden, but, like Windsor-Forest, Castle-Howard relies on a more tangled system of perceptions than that. Fitting Irwin's poem into the narrative of country-house or estate poems is not

difficult. Limiting it to that narrative is next to impossible.

Perhaps most striking in as Virgilian an age as was the Augustan is Anne Irwin's emphasis on Hesiod as a poetic model. Virgil is by no means absent from the poem (she refers to him by name in two verse paragraphs and a footnote), but Hesiod is her chosen mentor:

> Wou'd Hesiod, gentle Bard, my Verse inspire,
> Would he bestow one Spark of Past'rel Fire;
> No other Muse or Goddess I'd invoke,
> To him a Hecatomb shou'd freely smoke:
> He best can teach to sing the rural Lays,
> Who has so well performed his Works and Days. (81-86)

Irwin may be referring obliquely here to Thomas Cooke, whose translation of Hesiod appeared in 1728.[6] Still, what might be a personal allusion is also a sign of influence, and indicates a far different attitude from that expressed in Addison's "Essay on the Georgics." In Addison's opinion, the Works and Days is "but like a modern Almanack in Verse. . . . Thus does the Old Gentleman give himself up to a loose kind of Tattle, rather than endeavour a just Poetical Description" (150). Irwin considers Hesiod a worthy example for her to follow, in spite of Addison's objection, but she might not entirely disagree with him. In fact, she goes on to emphasize that the ability to describe something clearly in verse may not be a virtue:

> Here to discribe, exactly to unfold,
> Th'Attempt to Hesiod wou'd appear too bold,
> Some Beauties must be seen, but can't be told. (89-91)

Irwin manages to claim for herself two esteemed progenitors, Hesiod as well as Virgil, but uses Hesiod as a method of justifying her humility in yielding

technical supremacy to Virgil (45-46). She has Hesiod's authority to exempt herself from complete poetic description, because such an attempt would be "too bold." On the other hand, following Hesiod would in itself signify her humility; Dryden considers Virgil's Georgics to be "the best Poem of the best Poet" ("Dedication" 137), and Addison treats the Georgics and Hesiod's Works and Days as if they were the same poem but differently accomplished (149-51). In other words, claiming Hesiod as a model allows Irwin to claim the best subject matter for herself, but to free herself from being measured against "the best Poem of the best Poet."

This self-exemption from clear description is more of a theoretical gesture than a practical application. Description of the estate dominates Castle-Howard, though it is subordinated to praise of the Earl of Carlisle, the poem's addressee, the poet's father, and the owner of Castle Howard:

> Numbers from you their daily Bread receive,
> Th'afflicted Heart—through you forgets to grieve:
> To serve Mankind is your peculiar End,
> And make those happy who on you depend. (23-26)

Apparently the Earl objected with either real or feigned modesty to his daughter's praise, because in a letter to him of January 18, 1733, she cites Pope's description of John Kyrle, the Man of Ross, to defend herself:

> though your circumstances and his are different, social virtues are the same in all people, and if worthy of commendation in him, why not you? . . . if the commendation of feeding the poor [and] redressing the injured, by keeping 'em out of [the] hands of attorneys, are low subjects, not worthy of notice, Mr. Pope would not

> have admitted 'em into his poem. (97-98; ellipsis mine, square brackets in original)

Or as Irwin puts it in the poem, "Carlisle, to Thee I dedicate these Lays, / Reject them not because they sing thy praise" (11-12). Castle-Howard, like seventeenth-century country-house poems, emphasizes the "social virtues" of the landowner, virtues Pope sees in John Kyrle as well as Lords Bathurst and Burlington. An important difference between Castle-Howard and, say, Jonson's "To Penshurst" is that the estate is not for Irwin an embodiment of its owner, revealing in its excellences those of its owner, but instead stands as evidence of his worth through labour; she understands his relation to his estate as a corollary to the proverb "an Author by his Works we know" (39).[7] An author needs to produce works before the world shall know him or her; there is no shame in effecting works worthy of public notice.

After discussing her motivation to write the poem (great respect for the Earl), and placing herself within a classical poetic tradition (Virgilian and Hesiodic georgic), Irwin begins her description with generalities:

> From ev'ry Place you cast your wand'ring Eyes,
> You view gay Landskips, and new Prospects rise,
> There a Green Lawn bounded with Shady Wood,
> Here Downy Swans sport in a Lucid Flood.
> Buildings the proper Points of View adorn,
> Of Grecian, Roman and Egyptian Form. (92-97)

Irwin footnotes these buildings, all of them newly built, as "The Obelisk, Temple, Mausoleum, and Pyramid" (8, n. 1), but this first passage otherwise offers few specific details. She continues broadly to describe the scene at Castle Howard, but realizes that she needs to provide additional information: "This

in the main describes the Points of View, / But something more is to some Places due" (102-03). This is not a proposal to catalogue the entire estate, though, because just as "Helen, Dido, and the Spartan Dame" deserve to be best known while others properly "Lie undistinguish'd in the common Mould" (104, 107), so too are certain aspects of Castle Howard's environs more worthy of poetic notice than others.

Irwin repeatedly insists that gardeners must always attend to the land's natural tendency, in part because of the conventional opposition between art and nature in which art always comes out second-best: "Arts are long, and Nature's Debt soon paid" (133); and "Art in copying Nature pleases most" (228). However, she also insists that attention be paid to nature for other, more unexpected reasons:

> When ev'r her [Nature's] gen'ral Law by Arts effac'd,
> It shows a Skill, but proves a want of Taste.
> O'r all Designs Nature shou'd still preside;
> She is the cheapest, and most perfect guide. (114-17)

Many of Irwin's protestations of nature's superiority to art follow the "genius of the place" argument to claim that the already existing vegetation indicates the best pattern for the planned garden. On a practical level, different plants prefer different soil chemistry or exposure to the sun or moisture, though Irwin does not involve herself in such practical matters. Above all gardening is a matter of taste rather than skill; anyone can dig a hole and put a plant in it, but it takes a special mind to plan and design a garden. Here, though, she offers a different but related rationale for attending to nature as a "Guide" to planting: "She is the cheapest."[8] Reference to money is something of a taboo even in eighteenth-century georgics, and it seems an especially unlikely topic

when discussing an Earl's garden. In the letter already quoted above to Lord Carlisle, Irwin objects to the modern fashion holding "that to be plain and intelligible is a meanness" (97); perhaps this reference to the potential expense of laying out and designing a garden, and particularly the moving of earth, is part of her attempt to be "plain and intelligible." In any case, it complicates by making practical what looks otherwise like a conventional and idealized estate poem.

But there is one other difference. Castle Howard resembles such places as Penshurst, but was built to a plan that emphasized different ideas of living:

> A noble Pile, magnificently great,
> Not rais'd alone for Beauty or for State;
> Conveniency with the two former joyn,
> Too oft neglected in a great Design. . . . (53-56)

"Beauty" and "State" are the conventional terms in which a great house is normally praised, along with some metaphysical connection to the virtue of its owner. Irwin, however, adds an additional practical detail: Castle Howard is a place of "Conveniency." (Vanbrugh claimed that there were no drafts in the house, even in the large space under the dome.)[9] At this point, unfortunately, Irwin begins a digression on the tendency in criticism to blame rather than praise, from which she never returns. It seems, however, that this ideal place, signifying and confirming the Earl of Carlisle's nobility, is also a place where it is comfortable to live. Castle Howard is a place of wealth, certainly, but it gives no preference "To Riches, Grandeur, Fame, Ambition's Pleas, / Since Peace of Mind gives greater Joy than these" (244-45). The opinions of other people, of critics particularly, are less important than is the good life available to the residents of Castle Howard.

At first reading, Anne Irwin's Castle-Howard seems a conventional estate poem, translating the sort of praise contained in Jonson's "To Penshurst" and Marvell's "Upon Appleton-House" into a more straightforwardly aesthetic idea of the estate. Productive agriculture has no place in her poem, for example, and neither does any other means of earning money. Upon closer study, however, less conventional ideas appear, such as Irwin's avowed partiality for Hesiod rather than Virgil, the practical details of gardening's expense, and the "Conveniency" of Castle Howard. The cultural environment in which Irwin situates both Castle Howard and Castle-Howard marks the poem as a descriptive georgic with a very different regard for land use. Irwin is interested in how humans relate to the land, but the methods of relation that interest her have little to do with the conventional subject of material production. She understands that humans live in the world in a variety of ways, and so brings some of these other ways of being into the georgic.

It takes a similarly close reading to recognize Robert Dodsley's 1753 Agriculture (the only book published of his planned trilogy Public Virtue) as something other than a thoroughly conventional, instructional georgic. Dwight Durling, for example, sees Dodsley to be "interested in agriculture primarily as 'the source of wealth and plenty,' rather than, as with Vergil, a source of uncorrupted manners and virtuous living" (70). The moral and political aspects of the georgic have no real place in Agriculture, Durling implies, and it may be this lack that keeps John Chalker from so much as mentioning the poem in his genre study of The English Georgic, as well as the perception that commercial utility characterizes this particular example of the georgic tradition.

When Agriculture appeared in 1753, it included a preface that promised Commerce and Arts, the other volumes comprising Dodsley's planned georgic trilogy Public Virtue, would be published only if the public approved of this first volume. Evidently this was not just another example of the humility topos, because the volumes never appeared. The public most certainly did not approve of Agriculture, and neither have critics at any time since. Dodsley's most recent biographer, Harry Solomon, considers that the poem "proved that authoring hymns to manure and alchemizing Hales's Vegetable Studies or Tull's Horse-hoeing Husbandry into gems of Virgilian verse were doomed enterprises" (159). In his introduction to Dodsley's correspondence, James Tierney refers to the poem only once, and then only as "eighty-eight pages of tedious blank verse" (11). None of the correspondence Tierney edited has much to say about the poem either. The only sign of contemporary favour I have found is Catherine Jemmat's including two fragments of it in her collected works, and she both conceals the author's identity and apologizes for having to include work other than her own to make up a book large enough to merit the attention of her subscribers.

The rare mentions of Agriculture in literary history imply that commercial utility dominates the poem, and that the poem's focus renders it almost valueless. In fact a variety of narratives about environment use converge in Agriculture, as well as a number of different attitudes toward the cultivated landscape and the cultivation of the landscape. Dodsley even proposes a theory of class relations in the English countryside:

> From Cultivation, from the useful toils
> Of the laborious hind, the streams of wealth
> And plenty flow. (1: 21-23)

The first canto moves directly from an invocation of the "Genius of Britain" (1: 13) to an address to the poem's intended readership, relatively wealthy men who ought to have a better knowledge of agricultural processes. The real work is done by "the laborious hind," not the landowner, so Dodsley advises his wealthy reader to "reward / The poor man's toil, whence all your riches spring" (1: 49-50). Dodsley's blunt equation of labour with poverty, which implies an equation of relative indolence with wealth, may derive from his own experiences as a footman, documented in his books of poetry published in the early 1730s, Servitude and The Muse in Livery.

The clearest example in Agriculture of Dodsley's awareness of and willingness to write about class conflict occurs in the third canto. The farmer and his labourers have done their work, and the seasons have promoted their efforts: "Ceres on the ripening fields looks down / In smiles benign" (3: 56-57). The harvest is ready to be taken in, "Yet vain is Heaven's indulgence" (63). The sounds of horns and huntsmen and hounds foretell a stag's leaping a fence into the farmer's field, and the disaster of the hunt's continued pursuit:

> In vain, unheard, the wretched hind exclaims;
> The ruin of his crop in vain laments:
> Deaf to his cries, they traverse the ripe field
> In cruel exultation; trampling down
> Beneath their feet, in one short moment's sport,
> The peace, the comfort of his future year. (3: 75-80)

Dodsley is well aware of the consequences of a lost harvest, whether by hail or by some hunters plunging through a ripened field. Farmers have always lived close to poverty and bankruptcy, and in an agricultural community the

ruin of one farmer may also be the ruin of his labourers, both male and female, and their families. Rural communities do not have the same failsafe devices that the weight of a city's population can trigger, such as political pressure on the country's or the city's leaders, so this loss of a harvest is potentially catastrophic. Dodsley crowns his description with a question: "Unfeeling Wealth! ah, when wilt thou forbear / Thy insults, thy injustice to the Poor?" (3: 81-82). The poem is addressed to the Prince of Wales and its avowed readership is the nation's land-owning class, exactly the holders of the nation's "Wealth." Perhaps recognizing the extremes to which he has been led by passion, Dodsley in the next verse paragraph draws back to aver "Yet all are not destroyers" (85). Dodsley objects to the systemic division of labour and wealth, which means that those who labour have no wealth and that those who possess wealth perform no labour, but in the end he retreats from the implications of this analysis. There must be hope in the countryside, in the landscape, because without it there is no reason to work, and Dodsley's landscape is a place destined to be worked. His potentially revolutionary politics must be suppressed if he is to defend the spiritual value of labour and the national value of increasing wealth.

In spite of his awareness of rural economic practices, and his doubts about the equity of England's division of wealth and labour, Dodsley portrays a farmed landscape with a combination of agricultural detail and (in a literary sense) pastoral convention. The young farmer, if he is fortunate, lives

> On fields luxuriant, where the fruitful soil
> Gives Labour hope; where sheltering shades arise,
> Thick fences guard, and bubbling fountains flow;
> Where arable and pasture duly mix. . . . (1: 57-60)

Dodsley complicates his poetics by juxtaposing the conventional pastoral details of "sheltering shades" and "bubbling fountains," with "Thick fences" and "arable and pasture." It is a place of work, or the "fruitful soil" would provide all things for them rather than just "[give] Labour hope," but it is also a place of native fertility and beauty. Dodsley's England has nothing in common with a factory-farm, where technology wages a kind of war on the soil's self-preserving reluctance to consume itself in productivity.

Toward the end of the first canto, in the prerequisite O fortunatos nimium section, Dodsley includes local and family history in describing how a farmer relates to the land. Happy the man who is freed from civilized corruption by ancestral connection to the worked landscape:

> he plants his foot
> With firmness on his old paternal fields,
> And stands unshaken. There sweet prospects rise
> Of meadows smiling in their flow'ry pride,
> Green hills and dales, and cottages embower'd,
> The scenes of innocence, and calm delight. (1: 316-21)

The sensation of received ownership of the "old paternal fields" enables the farmer to perceive the beauty all around him as "scenes of innocence." The ownership here cannot be separated from the ability to perceive objects in nature that "Invite to sacred thought, and lift the mind / From low pursuits, to meditate the GOD" (1: 324-25). This is far from the utility normally associated with georgic instruction, and far from Dwight Durling's idea of Agriculture as a poem with little use for "uncorrupted manners and virtuous living" (70).

Dodsley's attitude to landscape appears most clearly in the opening

lines of Agriculture's second canto, an introduction to techniques for improving the different kinds of soil that a farmer might be faced with:

> The Naturalist, to sand, or loam, or clay,
> Reduces all the varying soils, which cloathe
> The bosom of this earth in beauty. (2: 5-7)

Dodsley continues at some length to explain why to add which substances in what proportion to "the varying soils," but it is clear from the grammar of the quoted sentence that all the different soils—no matter their agricultural productivity or infertility—"cloathe / The bosom of this earth in beauty." Sandy soil requires "cool manure" and "stiff cohesive clay" (3: 15) if it is to be especially productive, just as clay needs to be mixed with sand and broken up with a heavy plough (3: 23-31). But this is only for the needs of agriculture: every place of clay or sand is able to "cloathe . . . with beauty" the land.

Agriculture is unquestionably dominated by the narrative of utility, Dodsley explaining in detail how to alter the land and landscape in order to improve the prospects of cultivation, but it also includes a sense of wonder at the unimproved world. It is after all a farmer, in his fields, who recognizes nature's ability to "lift the mind / From low pursuits." As was suggested in the introduction and discussed (in the context of Evelyn's Silva) in Chapter 1 above, and is argued more fully in Chapter 6 below, the issue of cutting trees has long provoked writers to consider carefully the proper relationship between humans and nature. Trees, the largest living beings on the earth, some species able to live for hundreds of years, are a natural other against which humans cannot measure themselves. Animals provide metaphors (strong as an ox, greedy as a pig, and so on), and lesser plants (such as grass and flowers) provide analogues for the brevity of human life, but the great

trees stand primarily as witnesses to a passage of time that humans can only imagine, or follow through the second-hand knowledge of writing. Poets have had a special relationship with trees, from Ovid's description of the great tree being cut down, spurting blood on the man cutting it,[10] through the epic catalogue of tree species in Ovid and Chaucer and Milton, and the mystic qualities of forests in Shakespeare's plays, particularly in the comedies, right up to the works collected and published for so many specific protests in the late twentieth century.[11]

It is therefore not surprising that Dodsley is at his most revolutionary in Agriculture when he speaks of trees, and especially of human relations with them. Halfway through the second canto, while discussing the need for massive programs for planting trees, Dodsley identifies at least two distinct audiences for this subject:

> He then, who, pleas'd,
> In Fancy's eye beholds his future race
> Rejoicing in the shades their grandsire gave;
> Or he whose patriot views extend to raise,
> In distant ages, Britain's naval power. . . . (2: 212-16)

Among the powerful, those wealthy enough to put such programs in place, there are at least these two motivations to maintain the environment's vitality, a class-driven desire to provide for the family's continued leisure, and a patriotic drive to defend the nation by providing raw material for ship-building. (Dodsley seems to consider the possibility of financial gain incidental, though Evelyn in Silva, as we have seen, considered profit alone to be sufficient motivation.) Dodsley raises no other possibilities, at least not yet, and he reveals his allegiance by choosing next to enumerate the many

commercial uses to which wood can be put. The roll-call of useful trees includes the beech, box, yew, phyllerea, linden, birch, ash, osier, chestnut, walnut, elm, "And last the Oak, king of Britannia's woods, / And guardian of her isle" (2: 280-81). John Evelyn spends the bulk of his massive Silva cataloguing the uses of wood, while Dodsley names only characteristic uses, but Dodsley clearly considers that wood, especially from the oak, plays a major role in the British economy.

The passage is meant in part as praise for British resourcefulness in forest-use, and in part as a celebration of God's generosity in endowing Britain with such riches. These are wholly georgic purposes, perfectly at home in a classical example of the genre. However, and uniquely among the Augustan georgics, Dodsley makes this passage into a reckoning of ecological debts owed by the nation to the land. The cultural significance of the oak merges with its material economic significance to overwhelm the classical georgic project. With the mention of the oak Dodsley abandons his catalogue, and his praise of industry becomes a condemnation of the ecological ignorance exemplified by overcutting:

> But sunk, but fallen
> From all your ancient grandeur, O ye groves!
> .....
> Where are your beauties fled? where but to serve
> Your thankless country, who unblushing sees
> Her naked forests longing for your shade. (2: 286-87, 291-93)

Dodsley's petition that the Prince of Wales "Replace the lost / Inhabitants of [Britain's] deserted plains" is more complex than an aggressive program for planting (2: 307-08). It requires acknowledging that the public good does not

justify plundering the forest. The sacrifice made by the forest will always be greater than the public deserves. The phrase "naked forests" signals a unique understanding of the forest, since the phrase is an oxymoron if the identity of a place is tied to its present appearance. Dodsley here recognizes a persistence in the land's identity, which is also the persistence of communal human memory. These naked plains and hills were once forests, and they remain forests now in spite of the absence of trees. Their identity persists, in fact, through the remembered loss of that which once provided identification. In using the term "naked forests" Dodsley refuses to accept the legitimacy of arbitrary landscape change, especially that caused by industry.

This is no accidental revolution read into an unskilled poet's carelessly chosen words. Dodsley recognizes his writing's potential for material effect, acknowledges his hopes for change, and yet admits the difficulty of effecting change:

> O native Sherwood! happy were thy bard,
> Might these his rural notes, to future time
> Boast of tall groves, that, nodding o'er thy plain,
> Rose to their tuneful melody. But, ah!
> Beneath the feeble efforts of a Muse
> Untutor'd by the lore of Greece or Rome,
> A stranger to the fair Castalian springs,
> Whence happier poets inspiration draw,
> And the sweet magic of perswasive song,
> The weak presumption, the fond hope expires. (2: 315-24)

The regeneration of Sherwood Forest is a lofty aim, lofty enough to justify Dodsley's doubt at his work's potential for influence. The terms of his doubt

are significant, though, in that he confesses not to weakness but to an incomplete understanding of his genre's historical roots in Greece (Hesiod) and Rome (Virgil). Dodsley recognizes that his georgic has left the georgic track but sees this distinction not as poetic innovation but as cultural impotence: "The weak presumption, the fond hope expires."

Dodsley regularly refers to his status as a relatively unlettered poet, especially at such points of technical stress, but this is different from his more usual discomfort with his phrasing. As he attempts to continue Agriculture, he moves beyond the context of his genre and his subject. He does so in order to refocus his georgic, but also to legitimate his environmental concerns:

> Yet sure some sacred impulse stirs my breast!
> I feel, I feel an heavenly guest within!
> And all-obedient to the ruling God,
> The pleasing task which he inspires, pursue. (2: 325-28)

The sanctity of divine purpose both enables the continuation of Dodsley's poem and, paradoxically, guarantees the propriety of its unconventional thrust. Dodsley uses the codes of religious inspiration to fortify his position, unable otherwise to fit his ecological understanding of trees with his understanding of the georgic. Importantly, though, religious inspiration is not solely responsible for his defense of trees; it supports rather than motivates Dodsley's expressions of belief in the land. The georgic by definition supports human-initiated transformation of the landscape, but Dodsley wants to oppose change. Unable any longer to rely on the authority of genre, and either unwilling to abandon the genre or unable to imagine an alternative, he buttresses his argument with religious authority.

Dodsley recognizes that he needs to step outside the georgic if he is to

find expression for his ideas, but sees no option outside his genre. However, no discussion of the poem that I have found doubts the poem's place in the georgic tradition: it is called a weak georgic, even a bad one, but it is never called anything but a georgic. Its nascent environmentalism has a place in this capacious genre, as does Anne Irwin's focus on an estate's gardens and architecture rather than its farming practices, and Pope's including a variety of impulses and episodes to explain one version of human response to the environment. The broad definitions by which the genre is known imply that georgic ecology should be purely utilitarian. If these three examples of the genre prove anything, it is that georgic ecology represents a much more interdependent view of the world than straightforward utilitarianism.

No discourse is ever entirely detached from other discourses; literature is the confluence of innumerable disparate voices and ideas. Even individual expressions of relations to nature or the land are markedly complex. Pope's patriotic mercantilism combines with his poetic practice to recognize and describe nature as a community "harmoniously confus'd" (Windsor-Forest 14), and therefore vulnerable to the kind of manipulation his favoured brand of commerce recommends. The Hesiodic leanings of Anne Ingram, Lady Irwin, counter the period's renowned preference for Virgil, just as her practicalities unsettle her idealization. Dodsley's drive toward agricultural improvement co-exists with a belief in nature's self-sufficiency. Any theory of "Augustan ecology," or georgic ecology for that matter, will therefore have to be some kind of multiple discourse unto itself, recognizing and accepting different and sometimes contradictory impulses to comprise a common relation with the land. All three of these poets splice together elements of nature's being valuable in itself with the relevance of nature to human use,

even though none sees profit as the essential mode of human usefulness, and by doing so they reveal a georgic understanding of the world far more complex than that which genre theory draws for such poems.

The late twentieth century's neoromantic emphasis on virgin landscape, on non-interference in nature, should not be looked for in Augustan poetry. However, Romantic relations with the land, especially the denial of contemporary labour's place in the landscape, are less credibly sustainable than the complex Augustan sense of continuity over time and of interrelation between places and objects. Augustan georgic ecology regards aesthetics, economics, and many other discourses to be indivisibly part of the same structure of vision. In The Seasons, however, written under the influence of Cyder and Windsor-Forest and exerting a profound influence on such later poetry as Castle-Howard and Agriculture, Thomson seems unable to sustain the georgic connection between discourses. The Seasons is a radically iconoclastic work: a georgic poem without specific instructional value. Only the moral stance remains as a method of addressing the world, a method that the reader learns through an appreciation of landscape.

Chapter 4

The Georgic that Wasn't:

Landscape, Labour and Land in Thomson's The Seasons

> O man! tyrannic lord! how long, how long
> Shall prostrate nature groan beneath your rage,
> Awaiting renovation?
>
> (James Thomson, "Autumn" 1189-91)

By the mid-1720s, the English georgic had assumed a relatively fixed form.[1] Evelyn's Silva had entered its sixth decade of reprinting; Philips's Cyder was still appearing frequently, from a number of different publishers, and had initiated a boom in georgic verse; and John Gay's trilogy of georgics, Wine (1708), Trivia (1716) and Rural Sports (1720), had proven the literary potential of the variable georgic. Landscape had become central to the georgic, in part because of the significance of landscape and natural description in seventeenth-century poems. The most important of these poems was Denham's "Cooper's-Hill," which inspired a number of imitations, and georgic local verse reached its first high-water mark with Pope's Windsor-Forest (1713). However, 1726 was perhaps the most important single year in eighteenth-century poetry about nature and landscape. In that year appeared John Dyer's "A Country Walk" and "Grongar Hill," both popular but not especially influential, as well as what may be the century's single most influential poem: James Thomson's Winter, the 400-line poem that expanded over the next 20 years into the 5500-line The Seasons.[2]

The georgic foundation of The Seasons has long been accepted. John Chalker has argued this more than once, though his points seem not to have been fully acknowledged by those coming after him,[3] but no one has

addressed a fairly clear interpretive difficulty posed by The Seasons: on what basis can it be read as a georgic rather than a descriptive poem? The Georgics offered specific advice about agriculture, as did many of the imitations appearing in the eighteenth century, but passages about rural labour in The Seasons are more descriptive than prescriptive. Their descriptive, almost decorative quality directly answers what Augustan readers (as well as numerous critics in this century) see as a problem with georgic verse, that it deals with low subject matter in an elevated form.

The georgic was a highly esteemed genre. It was unquestioned that georgic poems should be both written and read, but it was felt in some quarters that the essentially agricultural subject matter of the rural georgic could not be similarly esteemed, and perhaps should not be written about at all. Thomson's solution was to re-invent the genre and thereby remove any need to mention potentially embarrassing subjects. Chalker may call The Seasons "the most thorough-going, the most complex, and the most sensitively serious eighteenth-century imitation of the Georgics" (English 92), but it is also the least georgic of the many Augustan georgics. Criticism of Thomson has greatly emphasized the visual in The Seasons, but this has limited the poem's potential to an explication of art history. Georgic poetry has rarely been understood as a radical genre, but in The Seasons Thomson managed to escape from the confines of the usual and imagine the countryside as neither simply landscape nor simply land, but as environment, as a place that lives and is lived.

Thomson instructs his readers about the difficulty of writing descriptive poetry, something with which he had become intimately familiar. The poet's relation to landscape, like the painter's, is doomed to failure:

If fancy then

Unequal fails before the pleasing task,
Ah, what shall language do? ah, where find words
Tinged with so many colours and whose power,
To life approaching, may perfume my lays
With that fine oil, those aromatic gales
That inexhaustive flow continual round? ("Spring" 473-79)

There is but one consolation for Thomson: "Yet, though successless, will the toil delight" (480). Description is hard work, is in fact "toil," although (or perhaps because) it can never succeed in representing landscape fully. Asking "what shall language do?" is part of Thomson's poetic project, to demonstrate his awareness of imaginative limitations while doing his best to exceed them. The synaesthetic images of "words / Tinged with so many colours" and of "lays" perfumed with "fine oils" and "aromatic gales" evocatively emphasize the liminal role of language, particularly metaphor, in describing the natural world, the nontextual world outside language.

Thomson's consolation ("Yet . . . will the toil delight") is no admission of failure, but a transition from theoretical speculation to practical application. His description may well be "successless," but this does not mean that he will not describe natural scenes in order to "delight" both his reader and himself:

See where the winding vale its lavish stores,
Irriguous, spreads. See how the lily drinks
The latent rill, scarce oozing through the grass
Of growth luxuriant, or the humid bank
In fair profusion decks. Long let us walk

> Where the breeze blows from yon extended field
> Of blossomed beans. ("Spring" 494-500)

That this passage is addressed to "Amanda," Elizabeth Young, allows Thomson to assume a highly directive role, controlling the reader's eye explicitly with the repeated injunction "See" rather than implicitly through the selection of details. Thomson combines Latinate words ("irriguous," "luxuriant") with onomatopoeia here ("oozing"), foregrounding poetic technique through such devices as alliteration ("breeze blows," "blossomed beans") and hyperbaton ("Of growth luxuriant," "the humid bank / In fair profusion decks"). In other words, Thomson emphasizes that the poetic mode of perception is the best way to see both such large landscape features as a "winding vale" as well as such a small feature as a "lily."

Thomson's suggestion that he and Amanda walk toward "the extended field / Of blossomed beans" is also poetic, though less obviously so. It is also, if one is to believe recent criticism and literary history, somewhat unexpected. Walking has long been important in literature involving landscape, particularly in those crucial sources for eighteenth-century landscape poetry, Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," but also in such diverse texts as the medieval allegory "The Floure and the Leafe" and King Lear. However, Anne D. Wallace, in her work on what she calls the "Wordsworthian peripatetic" (510), echoes John Barrell's The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place in commenting that

> [the] ideal poetic perspective in eighteenth-century England . . . does not mimic the movement of a traveler through actual terrain, . . . bypassing the sense of physical process and continuous succession that any land traveler, but a walker

> in particular (with his limited views and slow pace), would necessarily feel. (514)

Wallace and Barrell (as well as those critics footnoted at this point in her article by Wallace) are no doubt correct to emphasize the "flight of fancy" motif in eighteenth-century landscape painting and descriptive poetry, but the fact remains that Thomson in The Seasons, a poem acknowledged consistently by critics including Barrell as the quintessential eighteenth-century landscape poem, advocates walking as a means of apprehending the natural world.

Thomson emphasizes process and annual cycles by organizing his poem around the four seasons, but he also does so through his references to walking. Wallace invokes the convenient dualism to call Wordsworth's walking "georgic" and Clare's "pastoral" (510), but no such option presents itself in The Seasons. Thomson's walking may appear pastoral, insofar as he and Amanda in the passage quoted above only look at the landscape, but the poem's georgic intent encompasses educating Thomson's readers (of whom Amanda is one) the better to look at the landscape. When Thomson again addresses Amanda, he does so in the context of walking:

> Which way, Amanda, shall we bend our course?
> The choice perplexes. Wherefore should we choose?
> All is the same with thee. Say, shall we wind
> Along the streams? or walk the smiling mead?
> Or court the forest glades? or wander wild
> Among the waving harvests? or ascend,
> While radiant Summer opens all its pride,
> Thy hill, delightful Shene? ("Spring" 1401-08)

The succeeding passage describes the view from "delightful Shene" ("Heavens! what a goodly prospect spreads around" [1438]), which indicates Thomson's preference for a prospect over a more limited view. Similarly the path up Sheen Hill provokes no description from Thomson. However, he and Amanda are abroad at evening, when "the soft hour / Of walking comes for him who lonely loves / To seek the distant hills, and there converse / With nature, there to harmonize his heart" (1379-82); they are walking when it is nearly dark. It is important to notice that "The choice perplexes" Thomson and Amanda, that to her "All is the same." The decision to ascend the hill is in that sense arbitrary because all dimensions of the natural world, at least when the world is experienced at a walker's slow pace, are equal: field, forest, stream, or hill. Although Thomson chooses the prospect over other places to walk with Amanda, the moral of this passage is that valuing one aspect of nature over another is a mistake. The important thing is the land, to choose walking the land rather than some less noble pursuit.

In "Spring," Thomson says he believes that Lyttelton's skill at attentive, comprehensive walking guarantees and proves his innate nobility. It is through "the love of nature" that "We feel the present Deity, and taste / The joy of God to see a happy world" (899, 902-03), and it is that love which provokes Lyttelton to "stray" (908), "steal; or sit" (914), and "wander" (923): "Perhaps thy loved Lucinda shares thy walk, / With soul to thine attuned" (936-37). Lucinda's soul is attuned to Lyttelton's, but it is also attuned to nature in the same way his is. Their path is not described, but the view which they eventually achieve is:

> Meantime you gain the height, from whose fair brow
> The bursting prospect spreads immense around;

And, snatched o'er hill and dale, and wood and lawn,
And verdant field, and darkening heath between,
And villages embosomed soft in trees,
And spiry towns by surging columns marked
Of household smoke, your eye excursive roams. (950-56)

This description of the prospect from Hagley Park has attracted a great deal of critical attention, most notably by John Barrell in The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place (12-27). Barrell argues persuasively that the increasing detail in successive lines (from unmodified nouns, to adjective-noun pairs, to nouns modified by adjectival phrases) means that "the landscape is being thought of as arranged into lateral bands like Claude's, and the objects named are representing these bands" (19). To Barrell, this form of landscape description results from "what Thomson sees as a dialectical relationship between civilisation and nature" (15), a relationship recognized as one engendering "a sense of embattled hostility" (24) or "anxiety" (25).

But nature is not just something to be seen. Barrell's comments on the structure of perception encouraged by Claude's paintings and Thomson's poem are valuable, so far as they go. Barrell's political art history emphasizes "the contrast between the perception of those who are merely in the landscape, and those who are outside it, and observe it" ("Public Prospect" 25); his distinction is only between the "observers" and the "observed" (27). The problem is that Thomson seeks to instruct his reader into a better way to see the landscape (and vision is the focus of Barrell's work), at the same time as he seeks to instruct his reader how to relate to and participate in that landscape. Barrell has not addressed in the same detail the possibility of any relation to the land other than through vision. There is nothing wrong with

Barrell's discussion, so long as his work in this vein on Thomson is recognized as a more or less one-dimensional narrative. Its tight focus should provoke the question how else, other than through looking, eighteenth-century poets like Thomson understood positive means of relating to the environment.

Instead of offering advice about agricultural matters, Thomson undertakes a kind of instruction by example into a metaphysical understanding of and relation to nature. This is not as simple as learning to see properly, because the visual is only one way of apprehending the natural world (as Thomson's references to the odour of bean-fields makes clear). Anne Finch had attempted something similar in her "Nocturnal Reverie," choosing to celebrate the time "whilst Tyrant-Man do's sleep" as the time most naturally beautiful (38), as a time when "silent Musings urge the Mind to Seek / Something, too high for Syllables to speak" (41-42).[4] Thomson built his poem squarely on Finch's impulse toward this "Something," but sought to integrate the whole life of Britain, by day and by night, its labour and its thought, into his idea of nature. Simply put, the instructional intent of The Seasons is to educate the reader into a right relation with the natural world, a relation not entirely dependent on a detached viewing position.

The problem this raises for Thomson is how to fit description of agricultural labour into a georgic poem that offers little advice about agricultural labour. This is not a significant difficulty in the 1726 Winter, which because of weather-imposed limitations on those labouring in the countryside includes only a single 10-line verse paragraph on the subject of caring for sheep in winter storms, but it becomes more crucial in later expanded versions of The Seasons. It is not easy to distinguish extended,

precise description from prescription, and the sheer length of the poem makes some extended descriptions of labour almost inevitable. The passage in "Spring" on a farmer's need for insect control (120-36; discussed in Chapter 2, above) may however be the poem's only directly prescriptive passage on agriculture; others are less straightforward.

The passage in "Summer" on sheep-shearing, for example, includes a brief description of "the pastoral queen" and "her shepherd-king" (400, 401), apparently two labourers elected to lead a mock-court in the pause between the dipping and the shearing of the sheep. Because the moment is not a time of labour, argues John Goodridge, "it lacks any intrinsic sense of energy or purpose; but on the other hand it is not a suitable moment for the kind of pastoral festivity associated with the completion of peak-time activities, as the task is not yet complete" (55). The ambiguities of industry and idleness do not resolve themselves. When Thomson goes on to describe the arduous physical labour of sheep-shearing, while seeking to maintain the touches of festive pastoral, "Good intentions and embarrassment stumble through this passage hand-in-hand" (Goodridge 56).

Much of Thomson's difficulty with describing labour comes from his conflicted sense of what qualifies as labour, a problem that criticism of the period notices but does not resolve. As John Murdoch comments, "when you see in landscapes by George Lambert the figures of the gentry in the landscape, apparently watching the reapers at work, you may take it that the gentry too are working" (189). According to Murdoch, "'head-work,' the labour of thought and invention" (189), counts in the eighteenth century as georgic labour. In other words, "Gentry privilege was the Georgic privilege of directorship" (190). Anne Wallace, who admires but does not entirely concur

with Murdoch, agrees that "georgic insistently links moral and political labor with common physical labor" (513). She admits that "there is something slippery and unsavoury" about making an equation such as she argues Wordsworth does between farming and writing poetry (537), but asserts that such was the tendency in the eighteenth century.

John Barrell has also discussed at some length the issue of labour in the eighteenth century, especially the representation of labour. In "The Golden Age of Labour," he argues that labour's presence in a text or picture cannot be accepted as an "authenticating mark of realism," because all it does is tend toward "exposing the image of leisurely rural life as artificial" (189). By doing so, it dangerously "endorses the counter-image—the rural life of labour—as natural" (189) and leads to the creation of a "new Golden Age of Labour," which is also "a Golden Age of poverty" (190). Barrell wants to argue that requiring labour of the poor, even in representations of them, condemns the poor to a life not only of work but also of hardship and privation; it draws what Barrell sees as an unacceptable equation between labour and poverty: workers must be poor, and the poor must work hard. As was discussed in Chapter 3 above, Dodsley's objection to this sort of equation leads him in Agriculture to command the wealthy to "reward / The poor man's toil, whence all your riches spring" (1: 50). In The Seasons, the conflict between physical and mental labour moves from the periphery to the centre, especially as Thomson fulfills and clarifies his georgic intention.

Early in "Autumn," Thomson praises human industry as a personification greatly to be thanked for leading society toward its current elevated condition:

These are thy blessings, Industry, rough power!

Whom labour still attends, and sweat, and pain;
Yet the kind source of every gentle art
And all the soft civility of life. . . . (43-46)

There are two entirely different kinds of work to be done in the world, and although Thomson characteristically gives preference to "every gentle art," he still recognizes industry as an impulse to which "labour still attends, and sweat, and pain." The physical dimensions of life in the country matter to Thomson, and he does not forget to acknowledge the difficulties faced by those involved in manual labour. The problem arises when he translates the coexistence of different modes of labour into a single-thread narrative of progress from near-animal conditions, when a person "for [an] acorn meal / [Would fight] the fierce tusky boar—a shivering wretch" (58-59), through "the shelter of the hut" (63) and "miserable sloth" (73), and finally "To pomp, to pleasure, elegance, and grace" (92). Unavoidably, rural labour comes very early in the progression toward full civilization, and if the world of labour is interpreted as a progress-narrative, then the rural labourer is almost entirely uncivilized. The relation with nature into which Thomson seeks to educate his reader must therefore be very different from the relation of a labourer, though Thomson is more than aware of the ease with which a rural life of labour could be rewritten as a retreat from corruption into innocence and joy. The coexistence of discrete modes of labour stands at odds with the narrative of progress guiding Thomson's concept of human society.

However, in spite of his preference for the narrative of progress, Thomson admits a need to accommodate labour and labourers into his understanding of nature. First, Britain is almost entirely under human control; any prospect of the land will necessarily include signs of human

labour and habitation, such as towns or fields. And second, Thomson's Britain is an international centre of commerce, wealth, and industry; the country, and specifically agriculture, is how "Britannia sees / Her solid grandeur rise" ("Summer" 423-24). If he is to sustain his encomium of the British economy, as well as to embody it in description of the British landscape, he needs to combine these two different impulses (toward including labour in description, and toward estimating social worth by the division of labour). Thomson's solution is to remove specific agency from those doing the work:

> All is the gift of industry,—whate'er
> Exalts, embellishes, and renders life
> Delightful. ("Autumn" 141-43)

In this verse paragraph even the seasons themselves become personifications to be assisted by industry in achieving meaningful existence. Not only is work done by "industry" rather than by individual workers, but success is achieved not through work but "the gift of industry." The emphasis is on the result of labour, that it "Exalts, embellishes, and renders life / Delightful," rather than the process of labour. This disengagement from actual work is made transparent by Thomson's retelling the narrative of progress inspired by industry as a narrative inspired by Philosophy ("Summer" 1730-81); it is the identical narrative, but with Philosophy in the place of Industry.

The following passage in "Autumn" is a description of reaping, again singularly non-instructional. It opens with two lines of natural description, noting that work begins "Soon as the morning trembles o'er the sky, / And unperceived unfolds the spreading day" (151-52), but quickly becomes a description of a gendered labouring community:

Before the ripened field the reapers stand,
In fair array, each by the lass he loves,
To bear the rougher part and mitigate
By nameless gentle offices her toil. (153-56)

The men watch the women, the women seem not to look at anything. Only "the master" has time to look, "glancing oft on every side / His sated eye" (162, 163-64). The autumnal harvest landscape's beauty is regularly celebrated in eighteenth-century poetry, including the georgic, but Thomson here changes his focus abruptly, interrupting his description to offer a 130-line narrative episode about the poor Lavinia, daughter of the unfortunate and deceased Acasto, who is raised from the poverty of a gleaner back to her rightful wealthy status by the love of the noble Palemon, one-time friend and debtor to Acasto. The presence of work in the landscape leads Thomson to consider rural manifestations of class and wealth, and to link personal moral worth with financial worth.

Interestingly, Thomson has Palemon use horticultural metaphors to make his pledge to Lavinia. She proves her worth by labouring in the fields, but her worth is confirmed by Palemon's exempting her from labour and including her as some part of the natural world, under his care, that merits unproductive labour:

Oh, let me now into a richer soil
Transplant thee safe, where vernal suns and showers
Diffuse their warmest, largest influence;
And of my garden be the pride and joy! (278-81)

Lavinia is for Palemon part of his natural domain, but he translates her from a worker to something upon which nature works. He cannot accept her role

as gleaner: "It ill befits thee, oh it ill befits / Acasto's daughter . . . / . . . thus to pick / The very refuse of those harvest-fields / Which from his bounteous friendship I enjoy" (282-83, 285-87). Palemon reads Lavinia's presence in his field as a reproach against his gratitude to Acasto and believes that hard labour "ill befits" her innately, not just because she is Acasto's daughter. Accordingly he proposes to "Transplant" her from his fields to his garden, asserting her personal value to him by denying her economic value. He rejects her labouring role as uncivilized, thereby denying worth to his other labourers; he can only place her within his agricultural world by interpreting her through the visual codes that apply to landscape, and especially to the garden. The pastoral is not available in this section of The Seasons, since Palemon is a farmer rather than a peasant, so Lavinia finds herself transplanted from the agricultural to the gardening georgic, from the productive fields to the materially unproductive flower- or specimen-garden.

Thomson also resists accepting the usual relation of rural labourers to the environment in his discussion in "Spring" of vegetarianism and the place of meat-eating in the rural economy. After a brief reference to the Golden Age ("those white unblemished minutes" [272]), Thomson discusses the human tendency toward meat-eating: "with hot ravine fired, ensanguined man / Is now become the lion of the plain, / And worse" (340-42). Other animals, such as wolves, also eat domestic animals, but the predator who kills a cow "ne'er drunk her milk" and who kills a ewe never "wore her warming fleece" (343, 344); the steer killed by a predator never "ploughed for him" (346). Thomson emphasizes that he expects reciprocity in rural relations to domestic animals, but he finds this reciprocity replaced with ingratitude in the country propensity to exploit animals for their labour or as

material resources, and then to kill and eat them. The case of the ox provokes him to his strongest condemnation:

> That harmless, honest, guileless animal,
> In what has he offended? he, whose toil,
> Patient and ever ready, clothes the land
> With all the pomp of harvest; shall he bleed,
> And struggling groan beneath the cruel hands
> Even of the clowns he feeds? And that, perhaps,
> To swell the riot of the autumnal feast,
> Won by his labour? (363-70)

The "clowns" rely on the ecological principle of multiple use in their relation to animals. It makes poor economic sense not to use as fully as possible those things on which life depends, so long as animals can be considered "things" rather than beings.[5] Thomson, however, though he objects to those who make oxen "bleed, / And struggling groan," objects yet more strongly to those who change the status of the ox from fellow labourer to material resource. He seems on the verge of demanding action, yet pulls back: "but 'tis enough, / In this late age, adventurous to have touched / Light on the numbers of the Samian Sage" (371-73). Pythagoras, it seems, not just rural custom, has provoked Thomson's protest.

John Berger has noted the difficulty that nonrural dwellers have with articulating the human use of animals for food: "A peasant becomes fond of his pig and is glad to salt away its pork. What is significant, and so difficult for the urban stranger to understand, is that the two statements are connected by an and and not by a but" (5). It is, he argues, possible to bond emotionally with an animal and yet to kill and eat it, an idea which Thomson refuses.

Suzanne Kappeler, who has rewritten Berger's essay "Why Look at Animals?" as "Why Look at Women?" by substituting the word "woman" each time for terms referring to animals in Berger's text, has proposed that "[p]erhaps it is neither 'and' nor 'but,' but because" (68) (a peasant becomes fond of his pig because he is glad to salt away its pork). Kappeler's point is that Berger does not perceive the potential self-interest of the peasant's attitude, but it is unclear whether or not she accepts the possibility that a peasant may think in such a way as Berger proposes.

Thomson's complaint about eating meat is no practical objection, as the literary allusion to the "Samian Sage" makes clear, but a literary and ideological one. It is not that Thomson might not have a genuine distaste for those who eat meat, especially when "meat" is the remains of a co-worker, but he can find no practical remedy for the situation he objects to. Vegetarianism is not uniquely Thomson's preoccupation: seventeenth-century English hermit Roger Crab had written on vegetarianism; Defoe's Robinson Crusoe observes that the cannibals consider it "no more a Crime to kill a Captive taken in War, than we do to kill an Ox; nor to eat humane Flesh, than we do to eat Mutton" (134);[6] "the Man of the Hill" is a vegetarian hermit in Henry Fielding's Tom Jones; Robert Dodsley praises vegetarianism in Agriculture; physician George Cheyne wrote on the subject; and the creature in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is a positive character in part because he is a vegetarian.[7] But Thomson takes his critique of meat-eating seriously, more seriously than subsequent readers have taken it.

By emphasizing landscape rather than the land, criticism on Thomson has emphasized visual codes above anything else, an emphasis Thomson himself encourages through his frequent set-piece prospect views. The

remainder of this chapter will explore what other methods of relating to the land Thomson valued positively.

One alternative method Thomson uses to escape from the dominance of the prospect is to focus on individual objects of nature. As Barrell has argued, though, an art that focusses on the individual object in a rural scene would have been considered low art in the eighteenth century; it is for this reason that "pastoral is the lowest of the genres of poetry—because it imitates the motions of the minds of the least rational, the most ignorant, members of society" ("The Public Prospect" 25). Thomson does include some startlingly ignorant characters in The Seasons, especially the shepherd who helps a milk-maid, "The beauty whom perhaps his witless heart, / Unknowing what the joy-mixed anguish means, / Sincerely loves" ("Summer" 1667-69), a recurrent pastoral fantasy of the period, but The Seasons is clearly georgic rather than pastoral.

Trees, especially ancient trees, afford Thomson a unique opportunity to achieve particularity without sacrificing his elevated tone and intent. Both Evelyn and Philips in their own georgics had recalled "the sturdy Oak, / A Prince's Refuge once" (Cyder 1.574-75), formally known as the Boscobel Oak, a tree which had sheltered Charles for a night during the Civil War (Marren 19). Evelyn in Silva, as has been discussed in Chapter 1 above, spends a great deal of time celebrating ancient trees. The description of trees in "Summer" does not individualize the trees, but it does emphasize their cultural significance:

> Still let me pierce into the midnight depth
> Of yonder grove, of wildest largest growth,
> That, forming high in air a woodland quire,

Nods o'er the mount beneath. At every step,
Solemn and slow the shadows blacker fall,
And all is awful listening gloom around.
These are the haunts of meditations, these
The scenes where ancient bards the inspiring breath
Ecstatic felt. . . . (516-24)

Even though Thomson does not offer enough detail to identify this as a specific grove of trees, it is within the context of the poem a specific place, "yonder grove," toward which the poet walks. More importantly, it is a grove of "wildest largest growth" and "midnight depth." Visibility from within the grove, Thomson's destination, will be poor at best, confirming that it is Barrell's "occluded landscape" ("Public Prospect" 20). However, the fact that this secret grove is one of the "haunts of meditation," a place where "ancient bards" found their poetry, challenges Barrell's assertion that an occluded landscape is "emblematic of a situation in life from which no wider prospect is possible" (34). This grove is a place of true poetry, elevated, important poetry requiring not a physical prospect but rootedness in the environment.

The grove is however a place where no work will ever be done, unless the grove is good either for nutting or as a shelter for livestock. The person who walks within a wild grove likely has no intention of labour, but a knowledgeable person walking in an orchard cannot avoid thoughts of labour, particularly when the fruit is ripe:

the downy peach, the shining plum
With a fine bluish mist of animals
Clouded, the ruddy nectarine, and dark
Beneath his ample leaf the luscious fig.

> The vine too here her curling tendrils shoots,
> Hangs out her clusters glowing to the south,
> And scarcely wishes for a warmer sky. ("Autumn" 676-82)

This forms part of Thomson's description of Dodington's estate at Eastbury, so it would presumably have been identifiable to the poem's readers.[8] The verse paragraph in which this passage occurs follows one describing an "orchard big with bending fruit" (628), fruit intended for the georgic labour of cider-making, a task ably sung by "Philips, Pomona's bard" (645).[9] The orchard and its fruit are more specific, more detailed than Thomson's grove, though it is commonly claimed that Augustan poetry describes objects not in themselves but as representatives of entire classes of objects; detail in itself provides no defense against this notion of sensory blindness. The defense rests finally on an assertion of trust, a subjective and personal belief in the image, and I trust and believe in this image as a specific moment in the poet's relation to landscape.

Part of the reason for my belief in the poet's relation to the land here is due to his sensuous description of physical details in the previous verse paragraph: "From the deep-loaded bough a mellow shower / Incessant melts away. The juicy pear / Lies in a soft profusion scattered round" (630-32). It also comes from an earlier passage in which Thomson describes insects eating fruit:

> chief the forest boughs,
> That dance unnumbered to the playful breeze,
> The downy orchard, and the melting pulp
> Of mellow fruit the nameless nations feed
> Of evanescent insects. ("Summer" 299-303)

The idea of mellowness recurs in Thomson's descriptions of fruit throughout The Seasons, connecting the different passages. The important phrase here though is "the melting pulp," a decidedly sensuous image not limited to the sense of sight almost exclusively emphasized by Barrell and other readers of Thomson. The pears are clearly over-ripe, as well, and the presence of insects in them should alert a practical person to the orchard's mismanagement, even if that person operates strictly through the sense of sight. The absence of human labour in the passage, and the obvious pleasure Thomson finds in such a scene, may lead readers to term it pastoral, but an orchard, through the influence of Philips's Cyder as well as through other references in The Seasons, is normally a site of labour, and specifically of georgic labour. It is important to recognize that in The Seasons, as in Cyder, work does not keep labourers from apprehending the world through different senses, and that the presence of sensuous detail does not disqualify a passage from being georgic.

The first long prospect in the full Seasons provides another example of Thomson's appeal to senses other than sight. Barrell argues that "for Thomson, the landscape was a thing separate from man, in opposition to him" (Idea 54), but the appeals to other senses in this passage say otherwise:

> Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields
> Where freshness breathes, and dash the trembling drops
> From the bent bush, as through the verdant maze
> Of sweet-briar hedges I pursue my walk;
> Or taste the smell of dairy. . . . ("Spring" 103-07)

The "smell of dairy" is indeed an odour you can "taste." It is, for those who have spent time there, a pungent reminder of the country, stronger and perhaps even more evocative than the garden that "fills the liberal air / With

lavish fragrance" (98-99). Thomson uses "the cherished eye" (89) and "the raptured eye" (111) to organize the description, but the emphasis throughout is on things unseen: deer that "rustle" in a dense grove where "birds sing concealed" (94-95); young fruit, barely more than blossoms, still "unperceived" (100); a town "Buried in smoke and sleep and noisome damps" (102).

Evening is an even better time than early morning to recognize the life in the environment, Wordsworth's famous sonnet "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" notwithstanding. Finch's "Nocturnal Reverie" and Collins's "Ode to Evening" are two of the century's most sensitive and celebrated short poems about nature, and the last 250 lines of "Summer" are striking for their images emphasizing perception in a loss of vision:

> A faint erroneous ray,
> Glanced from the imperfect surfaces of things,
> Flings half an image on the straining eye;
> While wavering woods, and villages, and streams,
> And rocks, and mountain-tops that long retained
> The ascending gleam are all one swimming scene,
> Uncertain if beheld. (1687-93)

Thomson asserts the primacy of the visual throughout the long conclusion to "Summer," but he also emphasizes that little can be seen of the things he describes. This lack of vision explains why "Sudden to heaven / Thence weary vision turns" (1693-94), because at night the stars and moon are clear objects of perception. Or at least, they can be seen; whether they can ever be seen clearly is another matter, as Thomson implies when he criticizes people who feel "superstitious horrors" at the passage of the comet (1712).

It is before "Evening yields / The world to Night" that perception is at its most sensitive here (1684-85). After successive periods of increasing darkness, evening eventually manages

> To close the face of things. A fresher gale
> Begins to wave the wood and stir the stream,
> Sweeping with shadowy gusts the fields of corn,
> While the quail clamours for his running mate.
> Wide o'er the thistly lawn, as swells the breeze,
> A whitening shower of vegetable down
> Amusive floats. (1654-60)

J. Logie Robertson notes that the final three lines quoted here were absent between 1730 and 1744, and calls their reappearance "an unhappy restoration" since they describe "what must have been invisible" (130). I would argue however that Thomson knows the landscape well enough to make vision irrelevant, even if one accepts the dubious proposition that the moon and stars already mentioned were too dim to provide adequate light by which to see. Besides, as Finch described in her "Nocturnal Reverie," pale things remain visible longest at night. The "fresher gale" causes visible changes in the landscape, but it also causes audible changes: the poet can now hear the wood, the stream, the cornfield, as well as the always-audible quail. Even if he cannot see it, he is so thoroughly attuned to this place that the memory of ripened thistles recurs with the sound and sensation of the "fresher gale," suggesting the "whitening shower" of their seeds floating in the breeze.

There is though one kind of vision that definitively fails to see nature, and that is the scientific vision. The poet experiences great difficulty in seeing and representing nature, but the scientist (in spite of Philips's praise of the

microscope in Cyder, 1.344-58, and even though it is the scientist who has told the world that there are so many) is entirely unable to comprehend the multiplicity of plant species, especially after spring rains:

> Then spring the living herbs, profusely wild,
> O'er all the deep-green earth, beyond the power
> Of botanist to number up their tribes:
> . . . . . .
> With such a liberal hand has Nature flung
> Their seeds abroad, blown them about in winds,
> Innumerous mixed them with the nursing mould,
> The moistening current, and prolific rain. ("Spring" 222-24, 230-33)

The variety of nature exceeds "the power / Of botanist," as well as the limits of human perception. Thomson would cheerfully have endorsed the claim made in the late twentieth century of so-called unspoiled wilderness (often in the tropical rainforest, perhaps the Amazon Basin) that they contain still-undiscovered species, though I doubt he would have supported today's usual corollary that such places should be forever unspoiled. After all, Thomson celebrates the recently discovered, like the living beings in the blossom of the plum. The fertility of nature defeats the botanist, but it does not defeat humanity: it was after all plants that provided "the food of man / While yet he lived in innocence" (236-37). Thomson's version of Pythagorean principles places the fall of humanity at the moment of conversion from vegetarianism to carnivorousness, and finds "innocence" on "the deep-green earth."

If one of Thomson's opportunities to evade the pressure toward the prospect view is to focus on individual components of a natural scene, then

his descriptions of people play an especially important role in his poetic method. The place of people, especially rural labourers, in The Seasons is crucial both to Thomson's poetry and to my reading of it. John Barrell argues in "The Golden Age of Labour" that georgic realism was intended "not simply to describe more accurately the labours of the poor, but to prescribe them more accurately as well" (183, emphasis in original). The georgic, more than the pastoral, insists on the need for work to be done, and proposes to delineate how best to get it done. For Barrell, after 1770 rural labour came to be seen as "an authenticating mark of realism" that naturalized "the rural life of labour" (189). In itself this seems not such a bad thing, but Barrell follows it to its logical consequence: "it is not an idea, simply of the importance of rural labour and of the necessity of its being performed, but of the dignity of that labour as inseparable from the poverty of those who perform it" (189). That labour is naturalized does not for Barrell mean simply that it is a necessary part of country life; it means that if labour is to be considered dignified enough to earn the badge "realistic," it must be strictly subsistence labour, never generating sufficient economic capital to encourage social change. Barrell's point is that political action cannot grow from this myth "of a 'natural' order, before politics, even before history" (195). The georgic is in his model essentially a conservative, antipolitical, antihistorical genre. The world is as it is, and the georgic helps it to perfect its current state, rather than to change it.

But Barrell is writing of a slightly later time, though a time whose literature was heavily influenced by Thomson's Seasons. Thomson's relation to the kind of georgic of which Barrell speaks is not a simple one. Thomson is happy to acknowledge georgic labour at a macroecological level, in such

descriptions as the beauty of a worked landscape and the productivity of a beautiful landscape, but the microecological details of labour greatly perplex him. Thomson has earned the epithet "the poet of nature"; I have already quoted his editor J. Logie Robertson's comment that "A love for nature is synonymous with a love for Thomson" (xi). Placing the labouring poor within a relation to nature, however, is not easy for Thomson. As I have argued in this chapter, Thomson needed to re-invent the permissible content of the georgic in order to instruct his reader about a different kind of relation to the land, one not entirely based on resource extraction nor on detached observation. It is crucial to include labour in descriptions of the environment, in order to keep it from being simply a landscape, but less crucial to describe the details of labour, because too much emphasis on labour makes the environment a material resource.

Patricia Meyer Spacks proposed in her study of Thomson, The Varied God, that Thomson conceives of nature as "a vast pattern of order including man" (6), and that The Seasons is "emphatically dominated by a conviction of the prime significance of nature" (30). To do so, however, she had to suppress what she thought Thomson himself understood as an alternative vision, that "nature and art, or industry, are of roughly equivalent importance and power, each exerting significant influence over man" (33); it is significant that this insight appears in Spacks's chapter entitled "The Weakness of The Seasons." Spacks goes on to object also to "Thomson's occasional tendency to concern himself with simple description unrelated to his wider interest in the total pattern of nature" (34). In other words, Spacks sees as irrelevant or misplaced precisely those elements of The Seasons that I have emphasized in this chapter. It is for this reason that I have avoided reference to her book,

although it is a seminal work on Thomson. This chapter is not an alternative to Spacks's reading of the poem. Instead, it offers a reading of The Seasons as part of an alternative reading of eighteenth-century poetry about landscape.

Thomson does not follow a traditionally georgic trajectory in The Seasons, nor is his understanding of nature simply physico-theological. He understands the English environment, though reluctantly and hesitantly, as a system of ecological agents among which humanity is the most powerful actor, but still only one actor among many. His reluctance leads him to suppress the role of rural labourers in landscape and landscape change, however, and it is this obscuring of agency that drives many later eighteenth-century poems about landscape gardening, particularly William Mason's georgic The English Garden, and against which Anna Seward reacts in her shorter poem "The Lake; or, Modern Improvements in Landscape."

Chapter 5

Localism and the Garden:

Pope, Mason, Seward and the Genius of the Place

> I had a great curiosity to ramble a little about the country, but was discouraged from this adventurous attempt by fearful accounts of straggling damsels being picked up by errant knights, and carried to enchanted castles, so that I did not venture beyond the garden, a range much too small for the extent of my genius; however, I provided my self with a hoe long enough to reach to the antipodes, and notably began clearing away the weeds.
>
> (Elizabeth Carter to Catherine Talbot, July 13, 1748)

The literature discussed so far has focussed on the land's productive capacity for agriculture and silviculture, but the eighteenth century produced a considerable body of writing about gardens, especially landscape gardens and estate parks. Garden historians have covered much of this writing both well and in considerable detail, so this chapter is not about the history of gardening as such. However, John Dixon Hunt and other readers of gardens (and of landscape as garden) have with few exceptions emphasized visual experience. My ecological project in this chapter is to read some specific reactions to landscape garden design in order to problematize criticism's visual tendencies. I discuss the criticism of gardens and gardeners in Pope's "Epistle to Burlington," William Mason's The English Garden, and Anna Seward's "The Lake; or, Modern Improvement in Landscape" not to situate the poems and poets in the history of taste, but to illuminate eighteenth-century attitudes to land, especially land influenced by humans.

Some non-visual or extra-visual relations to the environment discussed in previous chapters have included the physical knowledge gained

by walking in nature; physicotheology; and perception by the other senses (such as smell and touch). This chapter extends the arguments surrounding such topics, but emphasizes localism in poems about gardens. At least until the work of Capability Brown, John Dixon Hunt has argued, eighteenth-century gardening was "a matter of finding . . . apt English visual idioms for antique and modern Italian forms" (32); Hunt equates Pope's translation of Horace into English with his translation of Italian gardens at Twickenham. There is an ideal garden to which gardens (and gardeners) should aspire, but it should find different expressions in different places and should do so by following "the genius of the place," an ambiguous but ubiquitous phrase in eighteenth-century poems about gardens.[1]

When Pope advises that the prospective gardener should "Consult the Genius of the Place in all" ("Epistle to Burlington" 57), he does not intend that an entirely new form of gardening should be invented for England, nor for each particular place in England where a garden might grow. Rather, if Hunt is correct, Pope's localism is limited to anglicizing Italy.[2] The advice quoted above, interestingly, is the only overt reference to ideas of place in the "Epistle to Burlington," except for mentions of actual people and places. When he rephrases his guiding injunction just eight lines later, he asks the reader to "follow Sense, of ev'ry Art the Soul" (65). The apparently localist "Genius of the Place" has nothing to do with specific location and everything to do with the perception of place; the viewer's "Sense" of the place outweighs the place itself. As William Cronon puts it, in a different context, nature is "a profoundly human construction" (Introduction 25). Pope's gardening ethic requires a gardener to achieve a proper understanding of how best to interact with nature at the level of culture, and then put it into action.

Pope's most famous criticism of gardening practices is his satire on Timon's villa, by far the best-known section of the "Epistle to Burlington" even though it takes up only just over one-third of the poem's length. Excess is not Pope's only concern, though, since the poem describes a variety of bad gardeners. Their sins derive in some measure from their inattention to locale, but primarily from their lacking the historical perspective that should moderate the pace of change in the landscape. Pope's criticism of gardeners before Timon emphasizes wrongful change, not wrongful design as such (although the failure to understand the change leads to failures in design and execution). For example, Pope describes Villario's richly wooded, patiently nurtured garden, then addresses the reader directly to indicate the abruptness of change on Villario's estate:

> Enjoy them, you! Villario can no more;
> Tir'd of the scene Parterres and Fountains yield,
> He finds at last he better likes a Field. (86-88)

It is not so much that Villario's "Field" is objectionable, nor that "Parterres and Fountains" are necessarily correct in this particular landscape. The pace and degree of change mean everything to Pope's evaluations. Landscape decisions are not connected closely to place, at least not if Pope considers "clap[ping] four slices of Pilaster" on "some patch'd dog-hole" (33, 32) equal to converting parterres into a field. In the case of Villario's garden Pope clearly does prefer parterres to fields, but Pope's apparently moderate approach should encourage his reader to apply his recommendations selectively rather than generally, and so shift the design gradually from one extreme to another. Villario's error is not to regret the contrast between "Parterres" and a "Field," nor to seek to exchange them, but to leap directly from one to the other.

Villario draws Pope's fire for the extremity of his reaction, not strictly for his taste (or even for his lack of taste).

The example of Sabinus illustrates the same lesson that Villario's does, but here the perpetual change in perception combines with a slightly mystic sense of nature. Sabinus took "annual joy" in the new growth on his deciduous trees (91), but after his death his son cuts them all:

> His Son's fine Taste an op'ner Vista loves,
> Foe to the Dryads of his Father's groves. (93-94)

Mention of "Dryads" is normally skimmed over as an intellectually empty move toward classicizing the text, as often it should be, but Pope here expresses no ordinary understanding of nature, or of dryads:

> The thriving plants ignoble broomsticks made,
> Now sweep those Alleys they were born to shade. (97-98)

The landscape Sabinus has created through skilful management can be said to exist on a higher plane than that of human perception. These "Dryads" are not simply neoclassical props, though they are that as well. These trees "were born to shade" these alleys. Pope means that they had been planted with that goal in mind, certainly, but the possibility exists of a deeper relationship between the trees and their location, that there is no other place these trees could have grown. This is far more than an objection against transplanting or treecutting. Pope recognizes a nobility in trees, and he considers that nobility to be a product of the destiny inherent in their place of birth. This is the reason that he insists on the inappropriateness of converting trees from grand ornament to such quotidian labouring objects as brooms.

Gardening is a reciprocal art for Pope. If a gardener exercises sense properly, "Nature will join you, Time shall make it [the garden] grow / A

work to wonder at" (69-70). Through sense a gardener comes to understand and to recognize the genius of a place. In any given location an infinite variety of gardens could be created, but though many of them would be beautiful, only one would be perfect. However, Pope's satiric object is not the disposition of gardens, though that is important to him, but the proper use of riches. The much-commented-upon episode of Timon's villa thus lets Pope dramatize many of the particular follies against which he has set himself in writing this poem, but by poem's end Pope finds himself pressed to answer a different question: "Who then shall grace, or who improve the soil?" (177). We have come some distance from the avowed purpose of the poem, which the argument claims is to criticize "The Vanity of Expence in People of Wealth and Quality" (586). The land, which looked at first to be simply the pretext for moral discourse, finally takes over the poem.

Pope answers his question of "Who then shall grace, or who improve the soil?" not by decrying expense, since he has argued in the "Epistle to Bathurst" that relief of the poor and the good of the nation both come from increased circulation of money, nor by stressing that "grace" either comes from or is innate in "the soil." Instead he shifts his argument from issues of cost and being, to issues of utility and propriety:

> 'Tis Use alone that sanctifies Expence,
> And Splendor borrows all her rays from Sense. (179-80)

The advice is clear enough, but Pope goes on to specify the kinds and degrees of utility that will sanctify the cost of improving or beautifying an estate. The very best landowner is a person

> Whose chearful Tenants bless their yearly toil,
> Yet to their Lord owe more than to the soil;

Whose ample Lawns are not asham'd to feed
The milky heifer and deserving steed. (183-86)

William Mason in The English Garden cautioned against introducing animals into the garden, because animals and gardeners understand the concept of pruning rather differently.[3] Still, removing the garden and its lord from their proper place in society, especially rural society, is a mistake of the highest order. Poverty and social unrest flow directly from the refusal to make the estate, including the garden, a space into which all may enter. If the estate is just the domain of the landowner's family, then the landowner has failed the community as well as the land; neither one can achieve its potential without fruitful interaction with the other.

Pope indicates the utility of the forest even more clearly than he does that of "ample Lawns," though he had remarked earlier that a garden benefits more from planting than from clearing. An estate's worth is decided by the quality and extent of its treed landscape. For Pope, the virtuous landowner is a man

Whose rising Forests, not for pride or show,
For future Buildings, future Navies grow:
Let his plantations stretch from down to down,
First shade a Country, and then raise a Town. (187-90)

If it is only for show, the splendor of a forest is as nothing. The landowner must explicitly intend the forest as a material resource to supply the nation-building efforts of well-intentioned rulers, if it is to have any legitimacy as an important aesthetic component of the estate. Trees must "First shade a Country" if they are to grow large enough to be commercially viable, but it is also crucial that they "then raise a Town" to justify the enjoyment of their

beauty as large trees. There is no separating these two things, not for Pope.

Pope's insistence that nature must be put to human use means that his idea of nature is far from the more republican position upheld by some postmodern environmentalisms. He has no place for the being of nature, except in the personifications of Nature and its components (trees, valleys, and so on). Many varieties of environmentalism would condemn Pope as blind for this, but I instead see him as a thoroughly ecological writer. The reason he has no difficulty reconciling the potential dualities of commerce and aesthetics is that he does not see them as dualities, not even within the circumscribed world of a landscape garden. Ecological systems do not remain in a state of balance, which means that nature normally produces a surplus of itself of its own accord, to guard against catastrophe. If humanity is to thrive, nature's potential to produce a surplus must be taken advantage of and encouraged. Pope's awareness of the environment's complex ability to sustain itself under moderate use makes him a surprisingly important potential ally for ecological writers.

William Mason, for his part, writing some forty years later, sounds at times very like a late twentieth-century environmentalist, though he uses precisely the kind of Augustan language that has led Augustan poetry to its place at the bottom of the (academic) Chain of (artistic) Being. He shows clear signs of republican environmentalism, almost asserting the equality of plants and humans, and so has difficulty reconciling commercial or even aesthetic uses of nature with the value he places on nature's being. But he is writing a georgic, a poem specifically intended to instruct its reader in manipulating the environment for human use. Mason tries to suppress his radicalism, but the result is an oddly uneven poem, too apparently conventional to interest

countercanonical readers but not conventional enough (or successful enough) to draw the attention of a broader community of scholars.

An especially clear example of Mason's sense of being in nature appears when he describes the pattern in which a gardener should plant trees in order to hide tall buildings from a garden's visitors. He recommends that the gardener leave considerable space between the underwood, which should not grow too near the building, and the trees, which should be quite close to it. The gardener must not starve the underwood of light, because the underwood will not thrive in shade. What concerns him most are the implications of not encouraging the underwood to thrive:

> Each plant that springs
> Holds, like the people of some free-born state,
> Its rights fair franchis'd; rooted to a spot
> It yet has claim to air; from liberal heav'n
> It yet has claim to sunshine, and to showers:
> Air, showers, and sunshine are its liberty. (3: 179-84)

The rights of plants. The dream of democracy, of meaningful participation in government, so much in the air with the American Revolution in 1776, loads these lines with a significance far beyond instructions for spacing trees and shrubbery. Mason approaches the most radical forms of contemporary environmentalism in this passage, the kind of passionate bioegalitarianism that has led to blockades against whalers and loggers, to blood being splashed on people wearing fur coats, even to spikes being hammered into randomly chosen trees in Canadian and American forests in order to sabotage harvests of timber.[4]

The passage quoted above has not been discussed in any detail by

previous commentators, but it has not been specifically exempted from the general disapprobation of the poem. It may be one of Mason's attempts to lighten the tone of his poem (dangerously ponderous at times), but the passage operates as a modern version of epic simile, calling on the politically charged topic of human rights to emphasize the importance of keeping plants alive. The issue of rights was much discussed in the late eighteenth century, and it is telling that one of the first responses to Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Woman was called A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes.[5] The possibility of extending the idea of rights to nature was not so strange as it might appear, and the argument continues today about the legal standing of natural objects (such as otters whose habitats have been fouled with oil, or trees in an area slated for logging).[6] The passage might perhaps be considered mock-heroic, according to the classical proverb about describing low objects in high language, but as has been argued above in relation to Philips's Cyder, the mock-heroic does not necessarily demean its subject. Rather, it can elevate the usual by making it seem worthy of the language used to describe it.

In The English Garden, Mason experiences serious difficulty justifying human dominance over nature, even though his georgic intent presupposes such dominance. When he discusses the cutting of trees, a subject that provokes many writers to re-examine their opinions on nature, Mason quickly runs into self-contradiction. His comments on the rights of plants stand at flagrant odds with the terms of his praise of Pope:

> With bolder rage
> Pope next advances: his indignant arm
> Waves the poetic brand o'er Timon's shades,

> And lights them to destruction; the fierce blaze
> Sweeps thro' each kindred Vista; Groves to Groves
> Nod their fraternal farewell, and expire. (1: 499-504)

It is a common refrain of The English Garden that one must not cut a tree if one can avoid doing so, so Mason's praise of Pope as a destroyer of gardens clashes with his reiteration elsewhere of ecological responsibility. This dissonance may again be intended humorously, since the groves nod to each other in the perfect symmetry satirized by Pope in his description of Timon's villa, in an image specifically echoing the "Epistle to Burlington" (117-18). Still, his praise of Pope as a destroyer of trees, even metaphorically, jars with Mason's objections to cutting trees. It might be argued that these particular trees are so symmetrical and artificial that they have lost their rights as trees, but his earlier proclamation of the rights of plants (quoted above) should instead lead him to identify the trees forced into symmetry as victims, not as worthless.

When Mason first attacks those who cut trees, he does so through direct reference to painting, to actual (though unspecified) paintings. He opposes indiscriminate logging by appealing to the great landscape artists:

> O great POUSSIN! O Nature's darling, CLAUDE!
> What if some rash and sacrilegious hand
> Tore from your canvas those umbrageous pines
> That frown in front, and give each azure hill
> The charm of contrast! Nature suffers here
> Like outrage.... (1: 21-23)

Logging an entire grove is akin to a vandal's destruction of an artistic masterpiece, but a forest is a living masterpiece able to mourn its own

injuries. Claude and Poussin are the two painters of landscapes most admired in the period, so it would be a disaster if even one of their paintings were destroyed. Mason reveals his environmentalism, then, when he equates logging with artistic vandalism as landscape design. The next passage, though, complicates an assessment of Mason's relevance to postmodern environmentalism. From his complaint against cutting trees, he goes on to oppose as a crime against nature, equal to logging, the fashion of "spotting the remote hills with little circumscribed clumps of dark foliage" (Burgh 136): he equates logging with planting. His objection to planting illustrates clearly the perils and possibilities of reading Mason. Equating logging with planting is barely comprehensible to most late twentieth-century readers, but to Mason miscalculated tree-planting is just as objectionable as indiscriminate tree-cutting. This is partly because of Mason's aesthetic, which objects to patches and straight lines, preferring instead long curving serpentines. It also owes much to Mason's concept of place as a crucial determinant of garden design, which in the final analysis is about deciding where a specific plant would be most likely to grow successfully.

The problem that exercises Mason most strongly in the first book of The English Garden is how best to adapt the geometric structures of older gardens to the serpentine curves of Capability Brown's naturalistic style. An appreciation of history, particularly English literary history, contributes to Mason's reluctance to cut trees; old trees on estates have "heard the strains / Of SIDNEY's, nay, perchance, of SURRY's reed" (1.324-25), and such trees should thus be defended as bearers of the nation's cultural heritage. The oldest trees are also those most discussed in late-twentieth-century environmental writing, much of which focuses on old-growth forests as places of knowledge

beyond human understanding.[7] However, because it had been the fashion to plant trees in straight lines, an estate being converted to Brownian principles must somehow have its long lines of large trees broken up. Aesthetic theory does not consider the age of the trees to be affected; it does not matter if the trees are old or young, only that they are planted in a straight line.

Mason prefers to move individual trees in the attempt to break up the straight lines of the scene's composition, an effort which he admits to be "A work of difficulty and danger try'd, / Nor oft successful found" (1: 330-31). Horace Walpole had learned the poor odds of success some years earlier at his Strawberry Hill. Once the attempt has failed, Mason advises, "Thy axe must do its office. Cruel task, / Yet needful" (1: 332-33). Mason feels compelled to make clear his objection to cutting, even in the face of advising it:

> Trust me, tho' I bid thee strike,
> Reluctantly I bid thee: for my soul
> Holds dear an antient oak, nothing more dear;
> It is an antient friend. (1: 333-36)

Killing "an antient friend" cannot be easy, no matter how "needful" the death might be or what species the "friend" belongs to. The kinship Mason (like John Evelyn in Silva) feels with the largest and oldest trees, which Mason describes here as a friendship between souls, ought to forbid the kind of alterations that a geometric garden would have to undergo in its transformation to the Brownian style. And so it does, to a point. Mason's final solution is to plant saplings in artful randomness around each saved tree, in memory of the rest that are felled. It is a poor remedy, but the only one ("So may'st thou save / A chosen few; and yet, alas, but few / Of these" [1: 339-40]). Death, in the modification of gardens, is unavoidable.

Far better is it to possess groves that have grown up within forests, for they have achieved a splendour where relentless geometry does not "Demand destruction" (1: 355). Only in such a case can death be avoided. In the woods of Britain, Mason believes,

> many a glade is found,
> The haunt of Wood-gods only: where if Art
> E'er dar'd to tread, 'twas with unsandal'd foot,
> Printless, as if the place were holy ground. (1: 356-59)

Mason declines to explain the tree-cutting that would be necessary in order to isolate such a grove within an estate's visual landscape. It seems unlikely that Capability Brown, even in Mason's hyperbolic restatement of Brown's naturalistic principles, would permit an estate to be simply a house in a forest, without openings or views. Still, the sense of nature as a place of innate beauty is strong in The English Garden, even if Mason's efforts are toward improving nature. Richard Jago's injunction to gardeners in his "Edge-Hill" is to "Improve, not alter" (1: 428), and such is Mason's attitude to nature. It is permissible only to "To mend, not change her features" (Mason 1: 77).

The limit at which "mend" becomes "change" is unclear. Mason chooses to place that limit at the point when nature fights back against attempts to influence its disposition. Should the gardener attempt too much, Mason warns, nature will assert her independent power:

> expect, bold man!
> The injur'd Genius of the place to rise
> In self-defense, and, like some giant fiend
> That frowns in Gothic story, swift destroy,
> By night, the puny labours of thy day. (1: 83-87)

The destructive power of nature to reclaim its proper condition overwhelms human attempts to enforce change, at least in theory. It is difficult to imagine the response of nature to, say, the building up of a hill in what had been a meadow. The principles on which Mason bases his defense of natural being are clear, however, and Mason expands upon them in the examples he goes on to give of natural self-restoration.

Mason does not address the larger details of landscape change, such as converting lawns into mountains or mountains into lawns. Smaller changes in vegetation, but just as thorough, are harshly rejected by the genius of the River Swale. The villain of the episode is a young man whose expertise in botany leads him to people his English garden with exotics:

> his laurel screen,
> With rose and woodbine negligently wove,
> Bows to the axe; the rich Magnolias claim
> The station; now Herculean Beeches fell'd
> Resign their rights, and warm Virginia sends
> Her Cedars to usurp them; the proud Oak
> Himself, ev'n He the sovereign of the shade,
> Yields to the Fir that drips with Gilead's balm. (3: 265-72)

The death and supplanting of the oak prompt the genius finally to respond, though that response does not come immediately. Spring, summer and fall pass uneventfully as the exotics grow stronger, as the native plants continue to vanish from the land. When, finally, the Genius acts, Mason's botany becomes positively xenophobic:

> Winter comes, and with him wat'ry Jove,
> And with him Boreas in his frozen shroud;

> The savage spirit of old Swale is rous'd;
> He howls amidst his foam. At the dread sight
> The Aliens stand aghast. . . . (3: 280-84)

The foreigners stand no chance against the power of England's native genius (even if it is aided, conventionally but inappropriately, by the Latin "wat'ry Jove"). Although the young man desperately builds a "glassy penthouse" to protect his plants (285), the genius uses hail to shatter its panes: "they fade, they die" (287). Such, Mason implies, is their deserved fate, and the useless expense is fit punishment for the vain gardener. The genius of a place, even if ignored at first, will eventually exact respect.

But Mason is a practical man, and in the next verse paragraph he explains exactly how best to protect exotics within the native landscape and so to satisfy "Fastidious Fashion" (290). Even though the episode of the Swale implies there to be no room for foreign plants in an English garden, Mason finds room anyway:

> let him chuse
> A sidelong glade, shelter'd from east and north,
> And free to southern and to western gales;
> There let him fix their station, thither wind
> Some devious path, that, from the chief design
> Detach'd, may lead to where they safely bloom. (3: 291-96)

The passage relates to Mason's declaration of the rights of plants. His concern is not that exotics have no place in an English garden, but that a gardener must know their place and must subordinate them to and within the dominant English landscape. Exotics are actually quite important to a garden, and Mason compares their role to that of a "softer episode" introduced by

Homer into "the web of epic song sublime" to make the work of art easier to read and comprehend (3: 299, 297). As in his discussion of how to avoid cutting old trees, Mason takes pains to make room for as many plants, and as many kinds of plants, as possible. His version of environmentalism includes a soft nationalist protectionism, but he is not forced by it to condemn non-native species.

Mason finds it easier to allow greater changes to landscape forms than to plants. He appears to find it easy to see the land itself as designed for human uses, but to believe that plants, as its inhabitants, bear rights and privileges akin to those held by humans. A marshy area, for example, even though it is populated by certain plants, can and should be altered:

> 'tis the bed
> On which an ample lake in crystal peace
> Might sleep majestic. Pause we yet; perchance
> Some midway channel, where the soil declines,
> Might there be delv'd, by levels duly led
> In bold and broken curves. . . . (3: 381-86)

A marsh has no place in a garden landscape, perhaps because of its unresolved status between land and water, but also because it is land without use. The emphasis on use is Pope's as well as Mason's, as with so much of the advice in The English Garden, but Mason chooses to insinuate his ideas on use-value rather than to state them openly. Converting a marsh into a lake or stream is permissible not because the marsh is ugly, but because it is a place unsuited for plants to grow, including grain: "the late-ripen'd sheaves / Stand brown with unblest mildew" (3: 380-81). The point is not just the aesthetically displeasing colour brown, nor exactly that the grain ripens too

slowly, but that the mildew is "unblest." At points such as this, Mason's understanding of nature combines taste, utility, and divine order. Nature, it turns out, is not always natural enough to merit its own salvation. Nature like the marsh, which is neither conventionally beautiful nor useful, does not prompt the same defence as, for example, an oak forest.

In fact, Mason cheerfully praises certain kinds of alteration to nature. One passage of The English Garden addresses how best to manage water for effect in the garden. Especially obvious tricks, making a series of canals look like a river, for example, or damming streams to allow for the production of periodic cascades, are denounced as "fraud" (3: 428) deserving only "pity" and "scorn" (3: 429). However, Mason praises rather than condemns grander feats of engineering that more drastically alter the landscape. When hills stand between a landowner and his desire for a waterfall, Mason recommends that the landowner adopt the techniques of James Brindley, the engineer:

> who led to rich Mancunium's mart
> His long-drawn line of navigated stream.
> Stupendous task! in vain stood tow'ring hills
> Oppos'd; in vain did ample Irwell pour
> Her Tide transverse: he pierc'd the tow'ring hill,
> He bridg'd the ample tide, and high in air,
> And deep through earth, his freighted barge he bore. (3: 451-59)

James Brindley's "boldness and originality" in building his system of canals for the Duke of Bridgewater, especially the aqueduct over the Irwell, were much celebrated in the period, though his achievements were occasionally doubted as well (Reed 233). Brindley's success at getting coal to Manchester via canals, tunnels, and aqueducts inspires Mason to suggest that gardeners

create artificial waterfalls by industrial means, but Mason quickly abandons the techniques themselves to concentrate on describing how to naturalize such artifices.

Because although Mason greatly admires Brindley's control of nature, he requires nature at least to appear uncontrolled. He requires that cascades created through Brindley's techniques must mimic nature exactly:

> Here too infix some moss-grown trunks of oak
> Romantic, turn'd by gelid lakes to stone,
> Yet so dispos'd as if they ow'd their change
> To what they now controul. (3: 466-69)

The waterfall created through the manipulation of natural forms cannot at the moment of cataract reveal its artificiality. The problem of "fraud" identified earlier by Mason seems to have nothing to do with the creation of a waterfall, but with the waterfall's apparent being. Mason understands this natural-seeming cascade as if it were really a product of nature, since he uses the same terms to praise it as he does for a "clear rill" that by its unspoiled nature shames the vanity of kings (4: 480). Though Mason gives high praise to the labour of creation, his environmental theorizing requires that perception of the created object occur in the absence of visible labour. A trick is most effective when it does not reveal itself as a trick.

For Mason, as for Pope, nature is a coherent ecological system upon which humans are nevertheless entitled to exercise their penchant for change. An artificial waterfall must look like a "natural" one, but creating a waterfall is no crime against nature. It is unacceptable simply to replace native plants with exotics, but there is most definitely a place for exotics in an authentic English garden. Both men believe that there is nothing more

beautiful than "nature," but that nature created by human hand can be more beautiful than nature not so created. Both Pope and Mason require that change be dictated by impeccable taste, but this does not outweigh their support of the idea of change. The extent of change is irrelevant to whether Mason approves of it; it is the degree of change, and at times how fully change is obscured, that determines Mason's response. The distinction between their ideas of nature is that Pope in the "Epistle" requires that a practical use be made even of objects perceived aesthetically, such as a grove of trees; Mason considers such objects not practically, but as beings in themselves. For Mason the genius of a place derives in large part from the lives of its associated beings, as well as its topography. Mason considers the genius to be far more material than Pope does, but still wants to support the idea of change.

Anna Seward, in "The Lake; or, Modern Improvement in Landscape," refuses to accept that standards of visual beauty can change. For Seward, the genius of a place can never be improved—only destroyed. A young man under the influence of the goddess Fashion decides that his estate needs some improvement, but he knows that he cannot afford the kind of sweeping renovation he desires. Rather than building a new house, he decides to flood a valley in his park with a small brook. Seward focuses on a single episode of landscape change that takes place within an established garden, so she does not address how the land came to be a garden in the first place. However, her ideas about landscape change are clear enough: humans cannot be trusted to change the land.

The opening lines of the poem, describing the manor house, indicate Seward's basic opposition to change in a landscape, and subsequent lines further illustrate her understanding. Seward gives little physical detail in the

first verse-paragraph, offering interpretation of the house's appearance rather than a description. Beauty as such has little to do with the judgements made of the house, by her as well as by its owner:

> Grand, ancient, gothic, mark this ample dome,
> Of fashion's slave, the uncongenial home!
> Long have its turrets braved the varying clime,
> And mock'd the ravage of relentless time. (1-4)

Neither grandness nor gothic detail predictably meets either praise or blame in eighteenth-century architectural writings; Walpole's Strawberry Hill, though much celebrated, was on occasion ridiculed. Still, "gothic" is the architecture closest to a native British style, especially in contrast to the "Italian" or "Gallic" villa which the landowner wishes to build but cannot afford (10). Gothic may here refer also to medieval buildings, in opposition to those Renaissance or later buildings in an Italian or French style. The crucial adjective of the first three, "ancient," is also the least physically descriptive, locating the building's identity in its survival through "varying clime" and "relentless time" rather than in its appearance. Mason in The English Garden emphasizes the vulnerability of non-English plant species to English weather, and Seward here implies that buildings can have the same vulnerability. The gothic in Britain was known primarily through ruins and very old churches or cathedrals, so Seward's reference to the gothic is to a more permanent architecture than anything Fashion would recommend. The landowner's profligacy forbids his building a house to Fashion's specifications, but Fashion still provides a plan for beautifying the estate: to halt the natural movements of the estate's plants and topography.

Seward differs from Fashion in that she recognizes a landscape to be

only thoroughly itself when it is active. Whereas Fashion proposes an end to movement, that trees be cut and branches trimmed and the stream stopped up, Seward emphasizes that nature, like a stream, depends for its identity upon ongoing action:

> Mid shrubs, and tangled grass, with sparkling waves,
> A little vagrant brook the valley laves;
> Now hid, now seen, the wanton waters speed,
> Hurrying loquacious o'er their pebbly bed. (29-32)

The grass has been tangled, the waves sparkle, the brook "laves" the valley; only the shrubs seem to do nothing. The small brook is the most active of all things in the scene, washing the valley, hiding and appearing, speeding, sparkling, even "Hurrying loquacious." The place, like the house, needs to remain as it is in order to retain its identity, but this does not sanction removing its active agency. The place's identity is bound up in its active state of being. Seward's idea of nature depends upon consistently active participation in the world, so active that the action alone of her images almost turns them to personifications.

Fashion tends toward personifying nature as well, but she still insists upon intervening in the landscape to halt nature's movements. Importantly, fashion seems not to notice the effect of enforcing passivity upon apparently independent personifications. Nature is active, but Fashion proposes to restrain that activity through violence:

> Yon broad, brown wood, now darkening to the sky,
> Shall prostrate soon with perish'd branches lie. . . .
> . . . . . .
> No more the dingles shall sink dark and deep,

No waving hedgerows round the meadows sweep;
All must be Lake this level lawn between,
And those bare hills, and rocks, that form the screen,
Peer o'er the yet proud woods, and close the scene. (25-26, 35-39)

Seward provides her reader with obvious objections to Fashion's idea of nature. Personification, for example, makes the limbing and cutting of the trees deplorable.[8] Both ecology and aesthetics might be applied to for grounds to oppose the cutting of the trees; the damming of the brook; and the drowning of the hedgerows, valley and dingles. The impulse throughout Fashion's speech is toward bondage if not actual death, toward quelling the activity and vitality that Seward finds in nature.

Seward at first takes care not to object as thoroughly as she might to her character's ideas. Her first reaction, indeed, is practical rather than philosophic, stating that a lake so created would spend many years out of harmony with its surrounding vegetation. It would take years for the nearby plant populations to shift gradually through succession toward aquatic species, but eventually succession would occur:

Sullen and tardy found, the Dryad train
Are still, thro' circling seasons, woo'd in vain,
Ere the dusk umbrage shall luxuriant flow,
And shadowy tremble o'er the lake below;
Which curtain'd thus, changes its leaden hue,
Rising a silver mirror to the view. (44-49)

Seward shows courage in giving Fashion permission to put her plans into action. Her criticism, though strongly worded, does not deny that flooding can produce beauty. In fact, Seward specifically predicts that once the

vegetation has had enough time to adjust, the "lead" of a barren prospect will eventually become the "silver" of a mature landscape. The proposed lake may eventually not seem any kind of disruption to the land. She objects to the flooding, certainly, but she does not interrupt her poem's narrative logic from plan to action to make her point. Part of her thesis in "The Lake" is that the logic of landscape change, once begun, cannot easily be stopped. The self-sustaining progression of control over nature is frequently argued in late twentieth-century environmental writings, best known in ecofeminist Val Plumwood's phrase "the logic of domination."[9]

Once the work begins, though, Seward retains control of the description; Fashion does not speak again, and exists only as designer and manager of the site. Consequently, Seward rapidly abandons the leeway she had given to Fashion's improvements. Vegetation is out of tune with the lake. Water-loving shrubs and trees, such as the willow, do not yet grow beside the lake, and the plants that do grow at its shores cannot grow in such moist soil. A long succession of species has to occur before the appropriateness of the ecosystem surrounding the new lake will approach that of the stream's ecosystem, drowned by Fashion and the landowner. The changes Fashion has introduced have consequences across time:

> No lively hue of spring they [the waves] know to wear,
> No gorgeous hue of the consummate year;
> No tinge that gold-empurpled autumn spreads
> O'er the rich woodland, sloping from the meads,
> But stagnant, mute, unvarying, cold, and pale,
> They meet the winter-wind, and summer-gale. (54-59)

Seward passionately loved Thomson's Seasons and wrote a series of letters on

them (published posthumously in her selected correspondence in 1811).[11] She praised Thomson highly and attacked Johnson for what she saw as his denigration of the poem in his "Life of Thomson," but she also spent considerable time studying the relationship between early and late editions of Winter and The Seasons. She came to two main conclusions: Thomson evolved an increasingly accurate understanding of his subject, and the passage of the seasons may have been the perfect subject for a description of nature's vitality. In the environment depicted in her poem, now that an alien lake dominates the landscape, the seasons are no longer relevant to nature. In stealing nature's capacity for active change (through the cycle of the seasons), Fashion has stolen the best of nature. A lake might make a beautiful "silver mirror," but reflection is not action. Seward objects to the lake's ability to dominate the landscape purely through its passivity, through the spreading of "silent waves" (53). The brook interacted with other parts of nature; the lake drowns them. Because it cannot act, this unnatural lake, divorced even from the vegetation that might elevate its leaden hue to silver, has no being of its own and in fact destroys the being of other parts of nature.

Fashion's final task before the landscaping is complete is to cut some ancient oak trees. The water beneath them is more attractive than it is elsewhere in the lake ("With better grace the torpid water shows" [67]), but Fashion refuses deviation from her plan and calls "her swarthy agents" to cut trees down (68). Seward's regret at the grove's loss is eloquent: "ah! it falls! / They who had seen whole centuries roll away, / No more half-veil the lake, and mitigate the day" (69-71). That these are oaks makes Fashion's power over the landscape that much more sinister, because the oak had long been a symbol of British power, its timber crucial to British naval strength. It makes

Fashion's preeminence over the landscape a preeminence over the nation itself, and Fashion by cutting the oaks makes the nation degenerate from its heroic, active past. Her cutting the oaks for neither commercial use nor aesthetic gain (at least according to Seward) signals Fashion's utter irresponsibility.

The cutting of the oaks awakens the sleeping Genius of the Place. As in Mason's English Garden, serious landscape change will eventually provoke the anger of the place's Genius. He sees the loss of the "winding brook, green wood, and mead and dell" (76); the "grassy lanes, and moss-encircled well" (77); and the "guardian oaks. . . , / His wintry screen, his sultry summer's shade" (78-79). He is perhaps most insulted by "the weak saplings, dotted on the lawn, / With dark and clumsy fence around them drawn" (80-81).[10] Like Mason, Seward denies that planting is any kind of replacement for the original vegetation (especially planting as unconsidered as this). The "weak saplings" may not be exotics, but they are not the trees appropriate to the place, and so the Genius does not accept them as adequate substitutes for his lost community of plants.

The anger of the Genius is predictable, partly because it is Seward's own anger and partly because the poem has coached its reader to respond in the same way; few would ever side willingly with "Fashion," for example. But it is predictable also because the traditional poetic role of the Genius of a place has been to oppose ill-considered change to the landscape. His inability to counter Fashion's project is rather less conventional, but the most original part of Seward's portrayal of him comes in the final verse-paragraph:

> His reign usurp'd, since Time can ne'er restore,
> Indignant rising to return no more,

His eyes concealing with one lifted hand,
Shadowing the waters, as his wings expand,
The injured Genius seeks the distant coast,
Like Abdiel, flying from the rebel host. (92-97)

The allusion to Milton's Paradise Lost in the person of Abdiel complicates the poem's conclusion, and creates room for several different readings to coexist without combining. First, the departure of the Genius from his Place, his displacement by Fashion, may signify the failure of Seward's poetic imagination to comprehend the world as it had come to be constituted in the late eighteenth century, a failure embodied in the paradox of a Genius of the Place without a place. Seward's transition from personifying description to Miltonic allusion might be seen as a rejection (brought on by her failure) of Augustan poetry itself, perhaps a rejection also of the social and cultural changes since Milton's time. She retreats from the failure of Augustanism into the past, where so many dreams of success are found.

A different interpretation would be to suggest that Seward attempts to render late eighteenth-century attitudes toward land and society in a language and a context which she understands to exist outside time, both of which she locates in Paradise Lost. It is an ancient idea indeed, that nature is beautiful because it bears within it signs of divinity. In Paradise Lost, as in medieval allegories, Renaissance travel narratives, and many other texts, nature partakes of the divine. Nature for Seward is intensely connected to the cultural forces that led to her particular understanding of Christianity, informed considerably by Milton's epic. The Genius's "Shadowing the waters" may be an allusion to Genesis, but the reference to Paradise Lost is emphasized by the naming of Abdiel in the poem's final line. Abdiel in the

Bible is a man; it is only in Paradise Lost that he is an angel. When Abdiel flees the collected rebel angels, he rejects Satan's principles explicitly, a rejection he recapitulates when he meets Satan in single combat during the war in heaven, telling him:

> Unjustly thou deprav'st it with the name
> Of servitude to serve whom God ordains,
> Or nature; God and nature bid the same,
> When he who rules is worthiest. . . . (6: 174-77)

Satan's rebellion against God is unnatural as well as blasphemous. By extension, Fashion's remodelling the valley is blasphemous as well as unnatural. The redesigned garden is a type of hell. The extended allusion to Paradise Lost that leaves the Genius of the Place without a place is not a failure of poetry, but a reflection of how completely Fashion's teachings ought to be rejected. Contemporary poetry is part of the fashionable world, so Seward cannot accept it as an adequate vehicle for her thoughts; she feels a need to connect her verse to older poetry, like Paradise Lost. Referring to Abdiel allows her to make clearly her point about land use while at the same time legitimating her ideas through connection to literary tradition.

The equation between Abdiel and the Genius becomes especially interesting in light of the equation drawn by Milton in the passage quoted above: "God and nature bid the same." According to Abdiel God's dominion over heaven is absolute, and the Genius's natural disposition of the landscape is equally incontestable here. It is not possible to improve the landscape in any way by changing it, because its natural condition is the best. It is unclear how fully Seward would endorse this position, even though it can be drawn from her poem, since writers in the late eighteenth century commonly

understood gardening as an attempt at giving nature back to itself, but this poem says nothing to oppose it. Jago's advice to "Improve, not alter," and Mason's to "mend, not change [nature's] features," may not go far enough for Seward, and it certainly would not for modern environmentalists. "Improvement" is change, and many of today's environmentalists hold that no change initiated by humans can bring good to the land.

In Seward's poem the Genius of the Place is forced to abandon its own place as the lake destroys the identity of this place. The Gaia theory aside,[12] literary environmentalism relies on narratives of apocalypse to describe the effects of human intervention in the natural world. There are less obvious versions of apocalypse, of course, more lyrical descriptions of it. John Daniel for example slips into the old language of poetry to help explain the consequences of clearcut logging:

> The trees are gone, the creatures are gone, and the very genius of these hills, that gathered rain and changing light for centuries, that grew and deepened as it brought forth a green and towering stillness—it too is leaving. It's washing down in gullies to a muddy stream. (75)

Seward's "genius" is not revealed as topsoil, but then Daniel's topsoil is able to gather sunlight. Both writers blend description and evocation as part of a program to encourage readers to believe, not just to convince them. Both writers understand and argue that human intervention in the natural world can result in the final devastation of the land. Although erosion of topsoil sounds more concrete than does the abandonment of a place by its genius, in neither case can the land be reclaimed; it can only be mourned, and read as a lesson against additional crimes.

Seward's understanding of aesthetic fashion as destruction makes her an important figure in ecological literary history. "The Lake," like Mason's English Garden, contains much that can be easily linked to postmodern environmentalism. Depending on the reader's opinion as to each work's relative success, both Mason and Seward work from an idea of nature complex enough either to leave the poetry unable to sustain its own vision, or to make the poetry relevant. Seward's particular achievement is to combine her opposition to both landscape change and rebellion against tradition in a single attack against the momentum of popular—or at least fashionable—culture, to portray inadequately considered landscape change as the death of place itself. In her view, relation to place is accessible only through the details of land, and no place is capable of surviving the kinds of changes humanity is now capable of inflicting upon it.

These three works, the "Epistle to Burlington," The English Garden, and "The Lake," indicate a general movement across the century toward a gardening model more conscious of local natural tendencies than of potentials, but they also indicate that concern at improper effect on the land is not new to the late twentieth century, and neither did it begin with wiht the literature now considered Romanticism. The difference between these poets is one of degree, not of kind: Pope sees place as an influence on garden design; Mason sees it as a determining factor; and Seward sees it as the key to responsible land use and sees garden design itself as possibly against the manifest intentions of God.

The poets' attitudes toward landscape and nature determine their attitudes toward environmental change. Although eighteenth-century gardens and literature about gardening have frequently been read visually,

none of these three poets allows the visual to control the garden's representation. Pope places the estate in the context of a national economy driven in large degree by timber, and Mason questions the distinction between natural and artificial. Seward, more challengingly than either Pope or Mason, complicates the visual by asserting a vulnerable identity in the land itself, visible in the specifics of place. As James Turner and Raymond Williams have argued, defining nature as landscape justified the wholesale alteration and domination of nature as a means of improving the landscape. As Seward illustrates, redefining the landscape as nature makes such overwhelming alteration unthinkable. Modern literary environmentalism has built upon and exploited this instability, and the final chapter of this dissertation explores the tension between such terms as "nature" and "landscape" in writings on a subject as central to the consciousness of eighteenth-century poets on nature as to that of twentieth-century environmentalists: the cutting of trees.

Chapter 6

Beyond Georgic Ecology: Augustan Protest against Tree-Cutting

> I have no great idea of the charm there is in the word property, except when I am trembling for some shady elms that are the property of a neighbouring squire. I used really to think that it was very good of my neighbours to take all the pains of cultivating their lands to make me a flourishing prospect, and never had any notion that a meadow would look a bit the greener for my being able to call it my own. But when the sacrilegious axes come abroad, I wish I could call the whole country mine.
>
> (Catherine Talbot to Elizabeth Carter, Sept. 4, 1745)

The georgic is not the only genre of poetry available in the eighteenth century to talk about the environment, though it is the one with the most authoritative stance from which to address it.[1] Other genres allow poets to approach the subject differently, and allow them to operate outside the established discourse (upon which the georgic draws) that questions the proper ways of going about land use but does not question whether to use the land at all. Although questioning the status quo is always a difficult task, some poets in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries took it upon themselves to doubt society's relation with the natural world. This chapter discusses four poems by women, Margaret Cavendish's "A Dialogue Between an Oake, and a Man Cutting Him Downe," Anne Finch's "Upon My Lord Winchilsea," Elizabeth Carter's "To Dr. Walwyn," and Mary Leapor's "Crumble-Hall," to illuminate different approaches to the problem of how to express what we could call ecological concern at a time without a vocabulary for it.

These poems reveal the possibilities that poets saw for environmental

ideas, particularly in protests against the cutting of trees (a frequent subject for environmentalists in the twentieth century). Women poets have an important early role in the tradition of ecological writing. As John Murdoch puts it, "The Georgic is the characteristic mode of eighteenth-century writing about landscape" (189). Women, however, did not write georgics; Anne Irwin's Castle-Howard is the only example I am familiar with. Evelyn in Silva, Philips in Cyder, Pope in Windsor-Forest, Thomson in The Seasons, and Dodsley in Agriculture all discuss the problems of cutting trees, but all of them place that action in a larger context of economic activity and social progress. These poets—Cavendish and Finch in the seventeenth century, and Finch, Carter and Leapor in the eighteenth—concentrate their attentions on the cutting of trees, and because of this emphasis they theorize a rather different understanding of human relations with nature.

Margaret Cavendish—a poet and writer from a slightly earlier time who nonetheless deserves a place in this discussion—approached the environment rather differently than did most of the other writers who have been the subjects of this dissertation. She took the popular genre of the dialogue poem, which Marvell especially favoured, and used it to question the relationship between humanity, in the person of a woodcutter, and nature, in the person of a large oak. There is little new in her technique, either formally or in the device of letting apostrophized nonhuman figures talk back, but the ease with which she problematizes conventional human perceptions of nature places her firmly in a tradition of environmentalist writings. Not only does her "A Dialogue Between an Oake, and a Man Cutting him Downe" use nature to argue a particular vision of humanity and social order (a fairly conventional theme), but it also uses nature to argue a

particular vision of how nature works and and how society ought to behave toward nature.

The poem's basic form is simple enough. An oak wants a man not to cut him down, and asks the woodcutter to justify his actions or cease them. A man wants to cut down an oak, and tries to convince the oak that its death will be for good reasons. The oak, at the poem's outset, frames the argument in terms of the benefits that humanity in general and this particular person will gain from the oak's continued life. He recalls shading the man from sun, rain, and snow; providing him with a comfortable place to sleep; and encouraging the birds to sing to him:

> And will you thus requite my Love, Good Will,
> To take away my Life, and Body kill?
> For all my Care, and Service I have past,
> Must I be cut, and laid on Fire at last? (17-20)

The troubling implications of setting another living being on fire are not lost on Cavendish, or the oak. Once the oak has been granted the consciousness to reproach a woodcutter for not recognizing the tree's past good service, the oak possesses the ability to discomfort his listeners. The oak takes full advantage of this ability to detail his probable fate:

> First you do peel my Barke, and flay my Skinne,
> Hew downe my Boughes, so chops off every limb.
> With Wedges you do peirce my Sides to wound,
> And with your Hatchet knock me to the ground.
> I minc'd shall be in Chips, and peeces small,
> And thus doth Man reward good Deeds withall. (23-28)

Cavendish may be thinking here of the ballad of John Barleycorn, another

text in which a different plant suffers this sort of torment. The great detail that the oak provides echoes the often spectacularly painful physical punishment inflicted on political prisoners at the time, such as the torture of a regicide reported by Foucault in his Discipline and Punish. The oak insists on the materiality of his existence and on his consciousness, both of which mark him as an individual, perceiving subject. If the oak is inanimate matter ("it" rather than "him"), then it does not matter what is done to it. The description that the oak provides of his own death only has weight if he retains some sense of individuality, and this the poem's form of the dialogue grants to him.

This poem was published four years after the execution of Charles I, and two years after Charles II was crowned King of Scots and fled to France. It is no accident that the tree to which Cavendish gives a voice is the tree most symbolic of Britain as well as of the monarchy (by convention as well as in the Great Chain of Being). The woodcutter responds to the oak's insistence on pain by appealing to the allegedly natural concept of generations changing hands:

> Would you for ever live, and not resigne
> Your Place to one that is of your own Line?
> Your Acornes young, when they grow big, and tall,
> Long for your Crowne, and wish to see your fall. (31-34)

From this ambiguous term "Crowne," the woodcutter goes on to develop a fairly comprehensive picture of how society reacts to the monarchy. He does not particularly defend his plan to cut the tree, ignoring or perhaps not recognizing the tree's claim of individuality. He is instead content to criticize the subjects of any monarchy, whom he considers perpetually "discontent"

(43) and unable to assess a ruler's virtue accurately.

The oak extends the woodcutter's social analysis, asking "Why . . . because that they are mad, / Shall I rejoyce, for my owne Death be glad?" (51-52). The idea of a self-sacrificing nature is a commonplace in seventeenth-century country-house poetry, as for example in Jonson's "To Penshurst" where the fishes leap into pans, or in Marvell's "The Garden" where grapes crush themselves into a walker's mouth. Cavendish, however, rejects out of hand the idea of a willingly self-sacrificing nature. The oak then continues the meditation on monarchy and concludes by hoping that the woodcutter will "let me live the Life that Nature gave, / And not to please my Subjects, dig my Grave" (65-66).

The woodcutter recognizes that this marks the exhaustion of analogizing tree-cutting with the monarchy's natural succession. He therefore adopts the utilitarian discourse common in eighteenth-century poetry, celebrating the oak's opportunity to participate in the glorious nation-building industry of shipping. The oak, however, rejects every dimension of the experiences in which he might participate as part of a ship, especially knowledge of the world and noble service to grateful merchants. The oak expresses considerable distaste at the prospect of striking a rock and sinking; being tossed by violent winds and waves; capsizing when a greedy merchant overloads the ship; being confined from liberty by ropes and sails; and catching a cold from the inclement conditions. Finally, the oak attacks the heart of the mercantilist program:

> I care not for that Wealth, wherein the paines,
> And trouble, is farre greater then the Gaines.
> I am contented with what Nature gave,

I not Repine, but one poore wish would have,

Which is, that you my aged Life would save. (99-103)

Ship-building is the primary reason behind proposals both earlier and later that England needed plantations of trees, as well as the clinching fact to permit the cutting of trees. Evelyn and Pope both consider ship-building as a logical and honourable end to a tree's existence, for example, while Dodsley silences his qualms about forestry by recalling the navy's reliance on timber. Cavendish here decisively separates herself from the georgic tradition by rejecting mercantilism, colonialism, and needless ambition. It is significant that the final three lines quoted here comprise the poem's only triplet; this is the poem's pivotal scene.

By raising the idea that the costs, financial and otherwise, of obtaining "Wealth" may outweigh the actual wealth to be made, Cavendish engages in what has come to be known as cost-benefit analysis, a central component of land-use planning at the time of my writing this. By putting the onus on the woodcutter to justify ecologically the pains involved in generating wealth through the shipping industry, the oak changes the foundation of the argument. No platitude or conventional sentiment will answer the oak's call for cost-benefit analysis, and nor will it answer the blunt assertion of contentment "with what Nature gave." As I have argued throughout, acting contrary to the apparent dictates of "nature" is not easily defended in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Poets who advocated so acting were very careful about how they expressed their reasoning. The oak challenges the woodcutter to leave behind his commonplaces and to address the philosophic issues behind his economics, asking that the woodcutter address the oak as an individual, perceiving subject worthy of conversation.

The woodcutter instead changes the subject, now speaking in favour of aristocratic culture: "To build a Stately House I'le cut thee downe" (104). The oak shall then live in close proximity to the very flower of the nation, great families partial to theatre and music and dancing and fine food and good wine. The oak rejects the woodcutter's images, again insisting that the woodcutter recognize and value the individual subjectivity of a tree:

> Both Brick, and Tiles, upon my Head are laid,
> Of this Preferment I am sore afraid.
> And many times with Nailes, and Hammers strong,
> They peirce my Sides, to hang their Pictures on.
> My Face is smucht with Smoake of Candle Lights,
> In danger to be burnt in Winter Nights. (116-21)

The repeated phrase "Peirce my Sides" (first appearing in the oak's initial objection to being cut down) alludes to Christ's wound on the cross, just as the oak's bearing of the brick and tiles on his head alludes to the crown of thorns. (The woodcutter has already referred to the oak's top as its "Crowne" [34, quoted above], although this also establishes the oak's quasi-allegorical relationship with the monarchy.) This analogy between Christ and a tree establishes the oak's virtue and his more-than-material worth, but it also problematizes the oak's argument by suggesting that his death is both inevitable and in the long run beneficial to humanity. I will return to this issue in discussing the poem's conclusion, but for now it is important to recognize the oak to be demanding that the woodcutter grant the oak the individuality that would give meaning to his complaints of torture.

And this tactic is represented as having good effect. The woodcutter enters into real dialogue with the oak; he does not simply propose a different

plan for using the oak's dismembered body, without considering the issues involved in killing another living being. The man asks why the oak would cling so firmly to a life that consists entirely of "scorching Sun" and "Winter's cold" (132, 134), and the oak responds by criticizing at some length the condition of "Man" (136). He points out the yearning after the unattainable, and distaste for the available; the dislike of both crowds and solitude; the willingness to imagine or create "Griefe" when there is none (141); and the pressure of constant mental restlessness and frequent physical illness. The oak knows all these things of humanity, but knows also that humanity "Yet in the midst of Paines would live, not dye" (145). The oak responds to the woodcutter's identifying the oak's life as painful by anatomizing the many discomforts of human existence and insisting on relative ease: "With my condition I contented am" (137).

The woodcutter's response to this is crucial. He admits the oak's analysis, but attributes the bulk of human woe to an inspired quest for divinely perfect knowledge: "He hath a Mind, doth to the Heavens aspire, / A Curiosity for to inquire" (150-51). The woodcutter meditates on this for several lines, then ends the poem by laying down a challenge to the oak:

> [Man] never can be satisfied, untill
> He, like a God, doth in Perfection dwell.
> If you, as Man, desire like Gods to bee,
> I'le spare your Life, and not cut downe your Tree. (160-63)

The oak does not respond. He does not speak to defend his life, either because there is no defence possible or because he is now dead; there is no clear resolution. The earlier allusions to the death of Christ, however, the crown and the wounds in the oak's side, may help to resolve the ambiguities in the

poem's conclusion. Just as the future existence of humanity required Christ's sacrifice, the continued existence of humanity depends on "nature" to sacrifice much of itself. Humanity depends on putting nature to use, so it makes sense to valorize nature's contribution, just as Jonson in "To Penshurst," for example, celebrates nature's willingness to contribute. Here the oak himself rather than the woodcutter makes the allusion to Christ, but the oak's understanding of his place in a religious sacrificial tradition is not the same as his desiring that "Perfection" which the woodcutter considers humanity to desire.

The argument over the oak's death comes down to one question, in the end: the relative worth of an oak and a person.[2] Christ's sacrifice was for what Christian tradition holds to be a good and larger cause, the future of the human race. The oak understands himself to have a potential place in the same grand tradition of sacrifice for large causes. The ends that the woodcutter proposes, however, are simply not of sufficient value to convince the oak that sacrifice is warranted. The woodcutter sees all human aims to be superior to those proper to an oak, in part because of the perpetual restlessness he sees as characteristic of worthy human ambition after perfection, after divinity itself. The oak throughout the "Dialogue" argues for different standards, as when he questions the costs of attaining wealth:

> More Honour tis, my owne green Leaves to beare.
> More Honour tis, to be in Natures dresse,
> Then any Shape, that Men by Art expresse.
> I am not like to Man, would Praises have,
> And for Opinion make my selfe a Slave. (125-29)

The oak's existence is of a different order than humanity's, and in the oak's

opinion at least of a better order. The woodcutter interprets human restlessness as a sign of potential divinity, but the oak sees it as vanity and inconstancy and arrogance: "I am not like to Man." The woodcutter pledges to save the oak's life, but only if the oak "as Man, desire[s] like Gods to bee." The oak insists on an individualism parallel to that which each human accords to each other human, but very clearly does not want to be seen either "as Man" or "like to Man." This is the profound gulf between the two points of view Cavendish brings together in this dialogue, a gulf that the oak seems to recognize but that escapes the woodcutter. The poem ends with the woodcutter's summarizing his conditions for assessing the value of a life, which are coextensive with his interpretation of human existence. No other way of life has value for the woodcutter. The oak does not respond, because there is no bridge between the competing ideologies, no way to make the woodcutter see that the meaning of existence might simply be to exist in the full awareness of nature, of which both oak and person are parts.

The ecological consequences of insisting on the equality in nature of a person and a tree are significant. In this poem Cavendish tries to shift the terrain of discussion about land use away from how best to put nature to human advantage and toward the difficulty of justifying the use of nature in any way for human advantage. She addresses not the condition of human life, a more frequent topic of poems that purport to be about the environment, but the meaning of all life, of which human existence is only a small part. In this reading the woodcutter stands in for all those people who would on a variety of grounds refuse to countenance such a subversive position. The fact that the environment has been under ever-increasing pressure since long before 1653, the publication date of Cavendish's

"Dialogue" in her Poems and Fancies, implies that over time the woodcutters have far outnumbered those who would side with the oak. The silence of the oak at poem's end represents the failure to accommodate human desires and needs to those of nature, the failure to bring those two points of view to meaningful compromise. In making the oak remain silent Cavendish seems to recognize that someone other than a tree needs to speak on the oak's behalf to the woodcutters of the world.

One of those who took up the challenge set by the oak's silence, though probably without any sense that she was following Cavendish's example, was Anne Finch. At some point before becoming Lady Winchilsea, she wrote a poem about her husband's family's estate, and found herself caught in the same ideological gap that Cavendish identifies and portrays in the "Dialogue." In "Upon My Lord Winchilsea's Converting the Mount in his Garden into a Terras, and other Alterations, and Improvements, in his House, Park, and Gardens" (hereafter "Upon My Lord Winchilsea"), Finch praises her husband's nephew Charles for perfecting the landscape left to him by the two previous Earls of Winchilsea. Finch finds herself caught in a paradox of allegiance: she wishes to praise the present Earl's intervention in the landscape but recognizes that by authorizing his intervention she authorizes those of his predecessors. Her realization of the paradox prompts Finch to a complex redefinition of her attitudes, dramatizing the intellectual activism needed to articulate an idea before there is either the movement or the ideology to provide a vocabulary.

In her other poems in which the fate of trees has a role, Finch prefers a narrative of anthropocentric utility in which trees willingly participate. It is this perspective that critics have alluded to in uncomplimentary references to

Augustan attitudes toward nature. In "The Tree," for example, Finch asks that Fate allow the great tree to live "Untouch'd by the rash Workman's hand" (20), neatly putting at arm's length the the fact that labour on her husband's family's estate would be instigated by the family, not by the labourers. Eventually, she tells the tree, a strong wind will come, and "some bright Hearth be made thy Urn" (32); the tree is preserved from one use only for another, but its use-value as fuel is obscured by Finch's extending the ritual of cremation to its burning. In "A Pindarick Poem, Upon the Great Hurricane" of 1703, Finch mourns the death not of one but of many mature trees, for specifically anthropocentric reasons sanctioned in her poem by the trees themselves. A large oak, for example, was of such an age that it

> made him, fearless of Decay,
> Wait but the accomplish'd Time
> Of his long-wish'd and useful Prime,
> To be remov'd, with Honor, to the Sea.
> The strait and ornamental *Pine*
> Did in the like Ambition joyn,
> And thought his Fame shou'd ever last,
> When in some Royal Ship he stood the planted Mast. (19-26)

Both trees fell in the hurricane. The violence of their deaths made them useless to the Royal Navy, their trunks probably split. The deaths of trees are mourned on at least two levels: anthropocentrically for their uselessness to humans, and moralistically as examples of a life interrupted. Economics, however, dictates the ecology of both "The Tree" and "Upon the Great Hurricane." In "Upon my Lord Winchilsea," the suppression of alternative discourses is not nearly so seamless.

The poem opens with a question: If we praise those who raise monuments to the deeds of their honoured ancestors, "With what more Admiration, shall we write, / On Him, who takes their Errours from our sight?" (5-6). The two previous Earls, though they did much to improve the garden, had left a small mount in it. Charles, the third Earl of Winchilsea, corrects this fault. Finch's argument is however more symbolic than this explanation implies:

> . . . as old Rome refin'd what ere was rude,
> And Civiliz'd, as fast as she subdu'd,
> So lies this Hill, hewn from itts rugged height,
> Now levell'd to a Scene of smooth delight. (15-18)

As Finch implies in her metaphor, landscaping is about control, not just appearance; Charles Hinnant notes that Finch is "clearly aware of the pitfalls involved in landscape architecture" (142). Just as Rome's civilizing influence cannot be read separately from Rome's violent subjugation of those whom it "Civiliz'd," so the present appearance of the terrace should not be observed without recognizing the material effort required to erase a hill from the garden. Finch does not exactly regard the connection as negative, since there is valour in Rome's military success and dedication in Charles' landscaping, but she draws the connection nonetheless. Still, the poem is relatively uncomplicated ecologically at this point. The third Earl is simply doing what the family had "threatned oft in vain" (9), and doing it well enough that John Evelyn saw fit to praise the estate in Silva (266). The tension is only the georgic one between natural beauty and the potential for improvement.

As Mason does with the marshy field in book three of The English Garden, Finch can describe changing the topography of a place without

causing herself significant ecological doubt. The shape of earth has no prominent place in the great chain of being, on the one hand, and on the other people find it easier to extend concern to that which is similar to them than to that which is different. The hill was an error; the garden and the family are better off without it. The conflict arises from the view that the terrace gives across the estate. From the new terrace, the viewer can "see a sheltring grove the Prospect bound" (23). This grove grows in place of "the Glory of the Seat" (25), a massive and ancient oak cut on the order of a previous Earl.

Finch is compelled by the interconnective method of her description to recount the story of the oak's death. In this retelling, as in the Ovidian tale which this echoes, no one but the Earl wanted the tree cut. Until he himself seized an axe from one of the labourers and attacked the trunk, disturbing narratives of class and labour even more than that of ecology, the men assigned to cut the oak refused to do so. Again, when faced with specific environmental change Finch describes that change in classical allusion:

> So fell Persepolis, bewail'd of all
> But Him, whose rash Resolve procur'd her Fall.
> No longer now, we such Destructions fear,
> No longer the resounding Axe we hear. . . . (45-48)

The fall of Persepolis and the felling of the great oak merge nicely in the phrase "such Destructions." The oak's cultural significance grows through equivalence with the ancient city's significance. Finch reveals her uncertainty about the justice of cutting the tree in the specificity of the image; the fall of Persepolis is much clearer in its application to ecology than Rome's civilizing those whom it subdued, just as the killing of a tree is a more blatant intrusion

into nature than converting a hill into a terrace.[3]

At this point, the poem's reader might expect to hear about the subsequent planting of the grove visible from the terrace, the view of which has prompted Finch's retelling of how the oak was cut in the first place. However, the grove never recurs in the poem. Finch instead makes explicit that her ecology is guided by utility:

> No longer now, we such Destructions fear,
> No longer the resounding Axe we hear,
> But in Exchange, behold the Fabrick stand,
> Built, and Adorn'd by a supporting Hand;
> Compleat, in all itts late unequall Frame,
> No Loame, and Lath, does now the Building shame,
> But gracefull simetry, without is seen,
> And Use, with Beauty are improv'd within. (47-54)

The economic profit of logging the oaks at Eastwell allowed the Earls to build the beautiful home (the "Fabrick") that Finch celebrates. As Charles Hinnant comments, "the poem appears to balance a concern for what has been destroyed with a genuine praise for what has been created" (144). Finch mourns the oak's death sincerely; she admires the ends to which the family has put the money gained from it. By so openly describing the economic reality of Eastwell, Finch offers an ecological sense of the estate barely implied even in the flexible mode of country-house poetry, Finch's closest model. The estate is flamboyantly self-productive in Jonson's "To Penshurst," what with fish leaping into pans and partridges aiming themselves at arrows; it is perfectly suited to the wishes of Margaret Clifford in Aemilia Lanyer's "Description of Cooke-ham," the ground rising to meet her footsteps and the

trees existing solely to shade her rest; but it is first in Finch's "Upon My Lord Winchilsea," written close to a century later than these two genre-founding works, that nature takes up an economic rather than a socially symbolic role. In these lines, Finch actually names the commercial value of a tree to a landowner, an equation rarely made in polite discourse.

However, except in this one moment of reference to building the house, Finch suppresses mention of the land's economic productivity. She refuses, in the end, to restore the absent referent of the family's wealth. The current Earl makes great improvements to the house, financed partly by demanding more from the land, but Finch praises Charles in specifically anti-economic terms:

> Florish her Trees, and may the Verdant Grasse
> Again prevail, where late the plough did passe. (76-77)

After recognizing the economic benefits of logging, and combining that recognition with an appreciation of trees, Finch goes on to prefer the aesthetics of "Verdant Grasse" to the wealth conferred by crops. To do this, Finch must refrain from investigating the connection between her leisure to enjoy the prospect and the money generated by the prospect to which she objects. Perhaps recognizing the difficulty of suppressing that connection once it has been made, Finch closes the poem somewhat precipitately. She abandons the land altogether, and proposes that a better poem would be written by someone more able to ignore the estate "and dare describe her Lord" (88).

Anne Irwin experienced the same difficulty in concluding Castle-Howard. Although her poem is more than twice the length of "Upon My Lord Winchilsea," Irwin ends with the same protestation of inability. After

relating a fable explaining the name Ray Wood (after the female of the roe deer, which the local nymphs loved to hunt) and the presence of the wood there (the nymphs, Daphne-like, were converted to trees to preserve them from a fate identical to "the Sabe'an Rape" [259]), she ends by stating her lack of skill and requesting another person to write:

> All I desire is that some gen'rous Bard
> Wou'd show the World how much the Theme deserv'd:
> Do Justice to the Beauties of this Seat,
> And like Appelles—draw a Piece complete. (301-04)

This similarity likely owes more to the convention of authorial humility than to allusion, especially since Irwin makes no clear allusion to either Finch or any of Finch's poems. Still, both Finch and Irwin state that there can be risk in addressing the relations between nature and society's powerful (the Earls of Winchilsea, Finch's husband's family, and the Earls of Carlisle, the current Earl being Irwin's father). Even though Irwin herself does not criticize her father or his estate, and in fact celebrates them both as beyond her capacity to praise them sufficiently, she still at poem's end claims an inability to render accurately the relationship between the family and their estate.

The difficulty Finch would have faced in so articulating her uneasy response to the landscape at Eastwell cannot be overstated. If Irwin felt it difficult to praise the relationship between her father and his new-built Castle Howard, Finch 30 years earlier would have found it even harder to criticize the relationship between the Earls of Winchilsea and their estate at Eastwell. The established vocabulary that characterizes postmodern environmental protest was not available to her; she had literally to invent a perspective and a language that might express her ideas. The long-ago cutting of the great oak is

the poem's pivot, the force of the oak's narrative absence interrupting and forbidding panegyric topography. Finch cannot avoid the economics of trees that her ecological perspective leads her to see, but that perspective does not allow her the freedom unilaterally to celebrate the financial advantages (and concomitant aesthetic advantages) or unilaterally to condemn the activity that provides such advantages. Unable to sustain what she understands as a contradiction, she ends her poem by abandoning ideas of ecology entirely. Her heroic act of discourse, however, continues in other poems written later in the Augustan period.

Fifty years later, Elizabeth Carter addresses the same issue, but by then discussion of cutting trees had been to some extent disciplined into polite irrelevance. In "To Dr. Walwyn, 1745, On his Design of Cutting Down a Shady Walk" (hereafter "To Dr. Walwyn"),[4] Carter chastises a prebendary of Canterbury for his decision to cut down a grove. She objects, however, by questioning the reasons for his actions, not his right to act. In attempting not to disrupt the social organization empowering the actions she objects to, Carter implicates herself in the actions themselves.[5] She accepts the terms of debate and so legitimates them in spite of herself.

This does not mean that Carter in any way supports the cutting of the trees. It simply means that her terms of defense are, unlike Finch's, reactionary rather than revolutionary. Carter values the grove as a transcendent and atemporal location, not as a place and not for any intrinsic value apart from its potential use:

> Beneath the platane's spreading Branch,
> Immortal Plato taught:
> And fair Lyceum form'd the Depth

Of Aristotle's Thought. (13-16)

Carter's reference to the importance of trees in ancient Greece is unlikely to threaten the hold that a nationalist English landscape theory would have on a patriotic Englishman like Dr. Walwyn. The ancient Greek preference for outdoor classrooms has little to do with the social symbolism of an English garden. The appeal to classic literature is not, even in the neoclassical eighteenth century, infallible. Carter's allusion in the next stanza to Virgil is even less likely to generate authority for her position, because Virgil's Georgics were a model throughout this period for writings about productive manipulation of the land. If a tree was obstructing him from gainful use of the land, he would have heartily recommended cutting it. Virgil's own reliance on agricultural theory, however Carter might have understood Virgil, makes him an especially ineffective ally against Walwyn's being guided by landscape theory in his practice, especially since he was seeking to improve the ripening of his fruit (Carter, Letters 108; see below).

Carter seeks to intensify her argument by giving voice to the trees themselves. This has become something of a cliche in postmodern environmental protest writings, especially in local protests where people feel closely enough identified with the land under consideration that they can speak for it, or for the trees, or the river. The oak can speak in Cavendish's poem because of the generic requirements of the dialogue poem, not because Cavendish reinvents the relationship between humanity and nature; these two poems, apparently similar in this respect, are radically divided by genre. Carter does not, and at this point in history cannot, take the revolutionary step of speaking directly for the trees. While aware of the potential of assuming the voice of nature, she resurrects instead the reactionary

mythological model of minor sylvan deities. The trees whose lives are threatened do not speak; their hamadryads do. And while the idea that the landscape is full of living beings has the potential to challenge the mentality which permits trees to be cut, there is little challenge remains if those beings are limited to outmoded personifications transplanted from ancient Greece. A hamadryad in the eighteenth century is not even an idea; it is a literary convention of an idea. In this period when scientific prose works on land use were so popular, so conventional an idea was unlikely to strengthen an argument such as Carter is attempting to make.

The public idea of a hamadryad, however, may not have been the basis for its appearance in this poem. As her letters to Catherine Talbot indicate, the figure of the hamadryad had private significance to Elizabeth Carter. Early in their friendship, on May 24, 1741, Carter wrote humorously to defend herself from her family's complaints that they could no longer keep up on her energetic and far-ranging daily walks: "I protest I do not know of any harm I have done, except pulling up a few trees by the roots, carrying off the sails of a windmill, and over-setting half a dozen straggling cottages that stood in my way" (1: 59). Talbot responds on June 27 that such a prodigious walker should have no difficulty walking from Deal (in Kent) to Cuddesden (in Oxfordshire), and that she would welcome a visit from Carter, on the condition that her visitor "promise not to root up any of my beloved elms" (1: 63). On July 20, Carter resolves the issue by assuring her correspondent that there is nothing to fear: "As I am as perfect a Hamadryad as you can possibly be, I shall pay the utmost deference to your trees" (1: 66). She makes reference to hamadryads twice more in this volume,[6] but this is the most interesting in relation to "To Dr. Walwyn" because it suggests that she

identifies herself as a modern analogue to the classical hamadryad. In the series of letters between Carter and Talbot, especially in the 1740s, Carter strongly supports walking for health reasons (both mental and physical), but she also extols its benefits as a way of developing a relation to the land. By identifying herself as a hamadryad Carter inserts herself metaphysically as well as physically into the landscape.

But both women feel powerless about changes inflicted upon the land. Writing from Canterbury, where she spent some weeks in the summer of 1745, Carter explains the genesis of this poem:

> Dr. Walwyn, to whom this house belongs, talks of cutting down a set of trees that form a very pretty romantic gloom, because they prevent the ripening of the fruit, which has been a source of great affliction to Miss Hall and me; and to please her what I have enclosed was wrote. (1: 108)

She concludes her letter by noting this intention to be singularly disturbing: "in every other respect, saving the article of cutting down trees, the Doctor is as worthy a man as I know." The situation is now clearer. Visiting with friends at a house that is not even theirs, Carter is at least two removes from having any influence over the fate of the trees. She writes to soothe and "to please" her friend, who though closer to influence remains powerless.

In her response, Catherine Talbot summarizes the difficulty faced by the two of them in reacting to landscape change. Both women see great beauty in the world around them, and both are in addition very familiar with landscape painting. In 1747, two years later, Talbot wrote that she now had charge over the family's flower gardens, when she could convince the gardener to follow her directions.[7] But she understands too well that only the

landowner has any real power to affect the land:

> I have no great idea of the charm there is in the word property, except when I am trembling for some shady elms that are the property of a neighbouring squire. . . . But when the sacrilegious axes come abroad, I wish I could call the whole country mine. (1: 109-10, quoted in epigraph above)

Neither Elizabeth Carter nor Catherine Talbot can claim "the whole country" as her own, nor even a part of it. Both find considerable beauty in the landscapes in which they find themselves, so they both want to resist change so inelegantly introduced and of so inelegant a nature as cutting down trees. However, they also both recognize how little scope for action they have, and they do not speak of this topic again. The last word on the subject is Talbot's unfulfilled wish "to call the whole country mine."

The deck is clearly stacked against Carter's finding success through her poetic objection. Only one stanza of this poem effectively challenges Dr. Walwyn's scheme, and that one stanza is effective because it interrupts both the poem's narrative logic and its series of classical references. The sequence might have gone on indefinitely from Plato, Aristotle and Virgil, but Carter has her narrating hamadryad interrupt herself:

> Reflect, before the fatal axe
> My threatened doom has wrought:
> Nor sacrifice to sensual taste
> The nobler growth of thought. (25-28)

This is as directly as Carter can challenge the social structures represented by and benefiting a gentleman landowner. By suggesting that an interest in improvement is the product of "sensual taste," Carter delegitimizes Dr.

Walwyn's opposition to her conservationism. What had been a dispute about aesthetics (whether present standards of beauty ought to supplant embodied history) becomes a question of morality. In redefining the prebendary as a follower of the senses and a devotee of taste, Carter redefines herself (and the hamadryad, interestingly) as a moral intellectual. Rationalism, she claims, is on her side.

Carter's biographer records, however, that the grove of trees "was not spared" (Pennington 2: 56, note). Carter may or may not have had the capability to influence the situation, but regardless, in the very next stanza Carter provided her opponent with ample opportunity to defend himself:

> Not all the glowing fruits, that blush
> On India's sunny coast,
> Can recompense thee for the worth
> Of one idea lost. (29-32)

Although she appreciates the material beauties brought by international trade, Carter rejects materialism as an inadequate replacement for the transcendence of intellect. She also rejects Dr. Walwyn's favouring a more materially productive form of nature over a less productive form; in her letter to Catherine Talbot she explained he was destroying "a very pretty romantic gloom" to allow "the ripening of the fruit." The physical, she argues, should not outweigh the metaphysical. Nothing, she says, is more important than an "idea"—and Dr. Walwyn might win the argument simply by agreeing with her. He may wish to improve his fruit yield, but he undoubtedly pursues his plan to cut the grove and enlarge the prospect in accordance with some "idea" of what a mid-century English landscape ought to contain. (The title under which the poem first appeared was after all "To a

Gentleman, On his intending to cut down a Grove to enlarge his Prospect.") The distinction Carter relies on between taste and thought is neither clear nor, ultimately, persuasive; taste is only thought with a bad reputation and a popular following.

By de-emphasizing the materiality of the grove, and so contributing to its ongoing material absence in the discourse about landscape, Carter translates the grove into just another idea, competing with other more popular and more fully theorized ideas. The death of the trees, which so haunts Anne Finch in "Upon My Lord Winchilsea," is finally suppressed as thoroughly by Elizabeth Carter as by the prebendary whose actions she opposes.[8] The poem appears finally as a consolation for someone who will inevitably lose the conservationist battle, not a call to arms. It explains the reasons why Miss Hall and Carter were unable to save these trees, but does not offer vigorous opposition to Dr. Walwyn's project.

Mary Leapor, writing at about the same time as Carter, took a different path toward defending the rural landscape, more akin to Finch's than to Carter's. While admitting that humans need to use the land, and seeing few reasons other than supernatural to reject such activities as cutting trees, Leapor combines georgic ecology with appeals to fate and to social responsibility. "Crumble-Hall," like "Upon my Lord Winchilsea," represents an altogether new kind of environmental writing. As Caryn Chaden comments, Leapor saw the role of a poet as being to write with "an emphasis on social commentary and the critical perspective of an outside observer" (32), which Chaden considers Leapor to have learned in large part from Pope but which in "Crumble-Hall" at least exceeds Pope's influence. Unlike every other writer discussed so far in these pages, Leapor refuses to operate within

established discourse, and in her urgent attempt to redirect the social processes behind environmental degradation she invents for herself the diverse and locally based environmentalism that writers of the late twentieth century would like to claim as their own.

A characteristic of this sort of literature is its heavy focus on context, on the social background to the particular view of nature that sanctions a particular use of nature. Richard Greene, the author of the first book-length study of Leapor, fails to understand the significance of Leapor's poetics when she comes to address this subject: "Oddly, her boldest statement on landscape comes in 'Crumble-Hall,' a poem arising from domestic service rather than agriculture" (137). The dichotomy between agriculture and domestic service behind Greene's surprise holds only in a crudely schematic way; servants on a rural estate have different tasks, but they do not live markedly dissimilar lives. At Crumble Hall, for example, Ursula the cook is married to a man named Roger who appears to be an outdoor labourer.[9] Mira, the poem's narrator, is like Leapor herself an indoor domestic servant. She knows all the other workers on the estate, both indoor and outdoor. The common labour of servants gives them better knowledge of the land, and this knowledge provides Mira/Leapor with an opportunity to advocate social change to alter the estate-holder's use of the land.[10]

At the poem's beginning, Mira leads her reader on a tour of the house, pointing out significant details along the way. Then, some 90 lines into the poem, Mira begins openly to satirize the family of Crumble Hall, particularly the lord's son. Biron commits what would be to an aspiring poet like Mira/Leapor a terrible crime, ignoring the books provided him and refusing the education guaranteed him by hereditary and gendered right. As the

description continues, Mira leads her reader to a small door that looks across the hot leads of the roof to the landscape beyond:

> Here a gay Prospect meets the ravish'd Eye:
> Meads, Fields, and Groves, in beauteous Order lie.
> From here the Muse precipitant is hurl'd,
> And drags down Mira to the nether World. (105-08)

Leapor uses the chance of a prospect, a conventional descriptive approach that encodes the land as landscape, to re-emphasize her own prospects as a servant; the same view offered to her cannot inspire the poetry it might from the lord, because it is not peculiarly her view. The crucial requirement of ownership, of dominion enough over the land to read it as landscape, disqualifies her from rehearsing the prospect before her; it disqualifies her from poetry itself. Unlettered Biron stands to have an easier time expressing the view conventionally, because it is a code tied more closely to ownership than to education. Mira confronts her exclusion directly. She mentions the prospect in order to mark her difference from those who are born to see it, and in order to specify her different relation to the land as a way of preparing her reader for her ecological proposals.

This interpretation is however far from definitive. Donna Landry, perhaps the most insightful critic of "Crumble-Hall," argues instead that

> The danger in this text is that Mira might get above herself, put on airs, show too much familiarity with the beauty of leisured prospects and the freedom of the countryside: write like a traditional country-house poet, in short. (112)

Landry theorizes that Leapor hurls Mira and the muse downstairs in order to avoid "that treacherous attraction to the aestheticizing language of pastoral"

(112). Leapor, in Landry's view, goes into detail about the servants' work and lives in order to escape legitimation as an Augustan poet. I propose precisely the opposite, that Mira/Leapor enters the world more appropriate to her position specifically in order to legitimate her poetry about the land within Augustan social and poetic codes.

If Mira/Leapor does not manage decisively to separate herself from the serving class to which she belongs, she can have no authority that could underwrite her thorough criticisms of Crumble Hall as a representative estate. Paradoxically, Mira/Leapor can only do so by demonstrating her intense knowledge of the servant life. The next 47 lines therefore describe other servants of Crumble Hall with all the humour, bathos, and (apparent) accuracy required of a real Augustan poet. Once Mira's represented attitude toward the serving classes confirms her status as a poet, she gives herself permission to resume the interrupted prospect:

> Now to those Meads let frolick Fancy rove,
> Where o'er yon Waters nods a pendant Grove. . . . (156-57)

The interruption to poetic discourse caused by Mira's social status has posed no significant threat; no lasting rupture has occurred, since the content of the interrupting passage between the two prospects seems to promise an unproblematically panegyric topography. Leapor goes to some lengths to qualify herself as a socially acceptable poet, anatomizing servants' lives for her readers, but it is important to recognize that Mira does so ironically to take advantage of the revolutionary potential of merely apparent convention. Mira does not connect herself with the upper classes by denying her life as a servant, but by intensifying her life as a servant; she is able to represent herself as so deeply and so self-knowing a servant that her readers will allow

her to transcend class boundaries and enter poetry.

Very early in her description of the treed estate, Leapor appears to add a touch of pastoral to the scene, mentioning that the song of nightingales in the grove "Has oft to Slumber lull'd the hapless Swain" (170). That adjective "hapless," however, makes what could have been a pastoral cliche into a moment of social pathos. The grove may be the only place where the estate's "hapless" labourers can find peace. In her position as servant and poet, Mira/Leapor is therefore the rightful defender of the estate's groves in both the real and the symbolic realms. Accordingly, just nine lines into its portrait, the represented prospect is violently interrupted by traces of the master's power over the physical scene:

> But, hark! what Scream the wond'ring Ear invades!
> The Dryads howling for their threaten'd Shades:
> Round the dear Grove each Nymph distracted flies
> (Tho' not discover'd but with Poet's Eyes). (165-68)

What could have been a smooth visual landscape description is interrupted by an intrusion from a different sensory register, a "Scream." The noises of cutting timber collapse into a protest by the dryads, combining to disrupt the conventional landscape. The visual is colonized by the intrusion, the poetic prospect diverted into its own practical defense. Poetry becomes ecology, in spite of its conventions, and Mira/Leapor makes no secret about her political allegiance. The parenthetical remark that the screaming dryads are "not discover'd but with Poet's Eyes" emphasizes that Leapor's ecological vision is coextensive with her poetic perception.

Mira believes that the oaks are being cut down "To clear the Way for Slopes, and modern Whims" (176). The master wants the oaks cut down in

order to create a bare prospect and in order to finance, through their sale for lumber, the building of a new parlour. Mira objects strongly enough that her screaming nymphs leave the realm of casual spirituality and actively haunt the estate:

> Yet (or the Muse for Vengeance calls in vain)
> The injur'd Nymphs shall haunt the ravag'd Plain:
> Strange Sounds and Forms shall teaze the gloomy Green;
> And Fairy-Elves by Urs'la shall be seen:
> Their new-built Parlour shall with Echoes ring:
> And in their Hall shall doleful Crickets sing. (179-84)

Fields in eighteenth-century garden poetry tend to be happy places, like Richard Jago's characterization of them in Edge-Hill as "sunny lawns, and open acres cheer" (1: 418). For Leapor, though, because it will take the place of a grove, the soon-to-be-created lawn will be both a "ravag'd Plain" and a "gloomy Green." The superstitious relation with the forest emphasized by later writers, including Keith Thomas in Man and the Natural World, bleeds into the being of the new parlour; the nymphs, no longer just customary literary convention, will haunt that part of the house paid for by the deaths of their host trees. Eventually, the supernatural haunting will become a physical possession by "doleful Crickets." Nature will reassert itself, and will redeem the ecological losses inflicted by the landowner.

The sweeping curse of haunting and desolation becomes, in the end, a threat. In this uniquely ecological poem, the prospect description leads directly to a unequivocal but unspecified challenge from servant to master:

> Then cease, Diracto, stay thy desp'rate Hand;
> And let the Grove, if not the Parlour, stand. (185-86)

Caryn Chaden notes that "[n]owhere does [Leapor] offer an economically and aesthetically harmonious example of a country house" (44). The master remains in control, and in Leapor's view the master has a less secure and less knowledgeable relation with the trees and the land, and is therefore less qualified than an indoor domestic servant to determine the fate of the land. Leapor like Finch clarifies the economic relation between logging and building, but unlike Finch she faces directly the implications of such an equation. The being of the oaks, which includes their aesthetic appeal and their significance to the estate's labourers, far outweighs their economic value: "she calls on the tradition represented by Pope to live up to its own ideals and apply its values universally" (Chaden 45-46). Leapor's ecology directs her toward social insurrection.

However, the conclusion to this poem has been read differently by some of Leapor's recent critics. Donna Landry sees the conclusion as "a long-deferred escape into . . . pastoral groves" that fails because "the country house can no longer serve as a locus of social harmony or of harmony between human interests and a more complex ecology" (118). In my reading of this poem, what Landry describes as an "escape" is more a triumph than a failure, because it is in turning to describe the ecology of the grove that Leapor demonstrates the magnitude of her ecological poetic project. Leapor's choice is not as simple as rejecting the idea of the country estate, either; she chooses instead to reinvent the country house outside the country-house poem. There is no possibility of "harmony between human interests and a more complex ecology," because ecology—defined as a sustainable relationship between the land and human society—simply must encompass the multiple demands of human interests. The disjunction that Landry emphasizes is not

a disjunction at all; Leapor's work is significant insofar as it recognizes the relation between human interests and ecology to be one of a profound interconnection, not an opposition.

For their part, Valerie Rumbold and Richard Greene read Leapor's conclusion as an admission of powerlessness. Greene comments only that "The curse is humorous and grim" (142), while Rumbold argues that the powers on whom Mira calls are confined "to a traditional language that only the servants will be inclined to take seriously. Mira's closing plea seems to recognize its own futility, meeting Diracto's obstinacy half-way even as she speaks" (73). Mira does not meet Diracto half-way; she tells him that the grove should not be cut, that it should stand. Rumbold interprets the last line as an admission that the old parlour might after all be destroyed, and presumably replaced with something grander, but the parlour is hardly Leapor's focus. She objects to the new parlour not out of loyalty to the old one but in defense of the trees that might be cut and sold to pay for the new construction.

None of these readers recognizes the revolutionary potential of Leapor's ecology. Mira/Leapor names the relation between economy and ecology in the conclusion to this poem. She specifies the connection between exploitation of the land and exploitation of labourers. She specifies the necessary connection between this dual exploitation and the estate's maintenance or improvement. The country-house poem, which is the model preferred by Greene, Rumbold, and Landry, permits no such connection to be made, because it protects the veil over economic activity on behalf of the economically powerful. Leapor may not rebuke the powerful as thoroughly as postmodern readers might like, but her revolution is

ecological, not social. There is no stronger statement in eighteenth-century poetry of the connections between social and ecological protest.[11]

It was clear to at least some of those concerned about the state of the environment in the eighteenth century that the georgic was an inadequate vehicle to express their concern. Georgic ecology, supporting the use of nature while objecting to immoderate use as well as outright abuse, was seen by them to represent an inadequate response to signs of crisis. (As has been often said in the context of feminism, compromise is unreasonable when one side of the argument is wrong and the other is right.) The four poets in this chapter responded in different ways to the crisis delineated and warned against by Evelyn in Silva, but all agree generally with Evelyn's assessment. Not one of these poets shies away from assessing timber-harvesting as a predatory destruction of nature, and it is this profound doubt that distinguishes them from the georgics that have been the subject of this dissertation's other chapters.

The conclusion to this project will articulate deeper connections between georgic ecology and the pessimism expressed in the poems of this chapter, but it may suffice to remark here again on the revolutionary potential of these poems. None of them belongs to ecocriticism's favoured historical period and literary mode, (neo)Romanticism, and this makes them doubly significant. First, they demonstrate that the tradition of environmental protest stretches back further than is generally supposed. More importantly, however, they exemplify a different kind of protest than the usual (and, historically, the usually ineffective) Romantic version. Articulating this alternative form of protest is the task of this dissertation's conclusion.

Conclusion

Towards an Augustan Ecocriticism

> Do we really need a "green" literary criticism to go along with our lead-free petrol and our ozone-friendly deodorant?
>
> (Jonathan Bate, Romantic Ecology 9)

The late 1990s is a time of environmental crisis. As Richard White puts it, "We search everywhere for our absence, but everywhere we find our own fingerprints" (173). The environment is lost, according to the terms by which this crisis is expressed, because there is no part of the environment entirely unmarked by human intervention. Nature is where we have not been; there is nowhere we have not been; ergo, there is no nature.

This dissertation has not considered the accuracy of this apocalyptic rhetoric. It may eventually turn out that environmental terror is simply this century's version of millennial panic; it may eventually turn out that this terror was a shamefully accurate soothsaying of catastrophe. This dissertation attempts not so much to resolve the debate as to explicate the debate's terms. The privileged version of "nature" is one without human participation, and which exhibits the "absence" White refers to. This is a profoundly Romantic idea of nature. Making sense of Augustan writing on this subject requires that a different idea of nature be found, because it is a different kind of relationship to nature that is being proposed in the eighteenth century.

This dissertation has discussed two apparently different eighteenth-century versions of concern about the environment, one organized by the georgic and one characterized by the occasional poem, one attempting system and one reacting to local circumstance. In this conclusion I want to summarize what the environmentalisms might look like that can be

synthesized from each one of these traditions, then suggest what a broadly inclusive "Augustan ecology" might look like, an ecological perspective that would make room for both disagreement and meaningful compromise.

Didacticism was much in the air in the eighteenth century, even though criticism of the period tends to avoid the topic. Poets and novelists and essayists were passionate about education, and they did not limit education to the schooling of children but considered the entire reading public as their class (or congregation, depending on the subject). Critics may want to disavow didacticism, but there is no way to do that when discussing poetry about the land. Georgic poetry dominated eighteenth-century poetry on this topic, and the georgic is unabashedly didactic.

At least, the georgic as a genre retained its didacticism, but individual georgics often varied considerably from their generic model. The Augustan georgic is based on Virgil's original and Dryden's translation, but Anne Irwin considers Hesiod a more important literary ancestor than either Dryden or Virgil. The georgic has agricultural productivity as its primary goal, but Robert Dodsley and William Mason spend more time explaining how to minimize visible human impact on the environment. James Thomson offers not practical instruction at all but moral guidance, advising not about the efficacy of agricultural practices but about the metaphysics of landscape perception.

The georgics all inherited from their genre, however, a common way of looking at the world: nature is where people live, and nature is for humanity to make use of. The idea of the Great Chain of Being remained in currency in the eighteenth century, even if (as Earl Wasserman suggests) it had lost much the potency it had enjoyed in the seventeenth century. There

is also a particular line of heritage that can explain this way of seeing, and the georgic is one genre that is careful to acknowledge its heritage. Thomson in The Seasons and Smart in "The Hop-Garden," among others, both mention John Philips by name as a forefather, and Philips's great success made him an attractive model for subsequent writers even if their topics took them nowhere near the subjects of Cyder. Philips in turn was heavily influenced by not just Virgil and Dryden, but Milton's Paradise Lost. And as Diane McColley has persuasively argued, Paradise Lost is driven by ecologically beneficent hierarchies that support each other in a more or less mutual relationship. A study of Milton's role in the Augustan georgic's development is beyond the scope of this project, but it seems likely that the influence of Milton's hierarchical yet reciprocal creation allowed the georgic poets to explore a conceptual framework akin to the chain of being as a still-vital way of approaching the world.

This conceptual framework, however, was never clearly articulated by any of these poets, and so each of them understood it slightly differently. Cyder, for all the tensions introduced by its frequent mock-heroic phrasing and Miltonic allusion, accepts the traditional relation between nature and humanity: humans can, if they act responsibly, put nature to practical use without detracting from nature but instead improving it, as shown by what the georgic poets saw as the greater beauty and increased productivity of cultivated nature. Anne Irwin sees nature as the backdrop for her father's newly built Castle Howard, but in her poem's conclusion she doubts the accuracy of her portrayal and her ability to "Do Justice to the Beauties of this Seat" (303). This may be just another example of the humility topos so common among polite writers in the eighteenth century, and Irwin's

anonymous publication lends some support to such an explanation. Still, she expresses doubt several times in the poem about her ability to describe the estate accurately, but she does not, once she has begun the description, vary from her plan.

Dodsley's Agriculture exemplifies the late georgic conflict between the ideology of use and a sense of responsibility. Thomson had already broadened the idea of "use" to include human perception by proposing in The Seasons that nature could function primarily as an aid to metaphysical self-education; Mason was later to expand "use" to include landscape gardening. Dodsley, even though his subject of agriculture would seem to encourage a use-oriented relation to nature, instead finds himself drawn repeatedly to the idea of responsibility. In the passage on trees, probably the clearest example in the poem of this tendency, Dodsley goes so far as to assess use in terms of responsibility: to a landowner's descendants, who will be thankful for shade; to a nation, which will be grateful for the contribution of timber to the economy and to the military (for ship-building); and for nature itself, which cannot survive profligate use. The responsibility for nature far outweighs that to family and nation. Dodsley moves toward rejecting use as the main criterion for determining human relations with nature, in spite of—as well as because of—the georgic model's insistence on use.

The georgic creaks to a halt by the end of the century, as it divides into increasingly specialized didactic texts and descriptive poems (many of them moralized). These late georgics have rarely been discussed, since critical attention on the period after about 1760 has long been on the novel, the poets of Sensibility, and ideas of labour and politics organized around (and in response to) Goldsmith's Deserted Village. The Augustan georgic found an

audience because it combined a number of the period's interests and tried to resolve them. Few readers will take Dodsley for a major poet, and certainly the reading public was less than receptive even when his georgic first appeared, but in Agriculture Dodsley managed to bring together the various impulses that would lead subsequently to the georgic's virtual exhaustion as a poetic genre.

These various impulses also found expression in literature other than georgic in the eighteenth century. I have focussed here on a very specific example of poems, mostly by women, on the cutting of trees, but other worthwhile objects of study might include the ode's portrayal of nature; landscape in the novel; or periodical writings on urban decay. I have chosen the poems I have as a specific counterpoint to the georgics: poems by women because women almost never wrote in the georgic mode, and poems about tree-cutting because I realized that cutting down trees also exercised the georgic poets, no matter what their ostensible subject.

Women probably avoided writing georgics because the mode demands that the poet assume sufficient authority to advise the entire nation; Dodsley addresses Agriculture to the Prince of Wales, for example, and chastises him for some specific mistakes that had been made on his estates. With the possible exception of Margaret Cavendish, the women whose poems I have discussed admitted to a common lack of control over landscape change. Anne Finch wrote "Upon my Lord Winchilsea" not to her husband, since he was not yet the Earl, but to his nephew who was charitably allowing the couple to reside at his estate; her husband's inheritance of Eastwell was no sure thing, though when that did happen it may not have given her much influence over landscape change either. Elizabeth Carter wrote "To Dr.

Walwyn" in response to the threatened cutting of some elms on the Canterbury property not of her friends, but of her friends' friend; the trees were not spared. Mary Leapor wrote "Crumble-Hall" to oppose her master's plan to finance renovations of the house by cutting some trees; not only were the trees not spared, but a few years later the entire village was moved out of sight from the house by her master's heir. Anna Seward in 1801 opposed the Dean of Lichfield's scheme to cut every other tree in the Dean's Walk, just as in 1769 she had opposed an earlier plan, making her opposition public only in 1780. Her letters were as ineffectual in 1801 as her voice had been in 1769; she mentions "The Lake" just once in her published letters, only two months after her letters to the Dean.[1] These women presumably avoided writing in the georgic mode because they saw no authoritative position available to them, and the consistent failure of their objections to landscape change demonstrates how accurately they understood their positions.

Still, these women insisted in a similar fashion on the same point: human relations to nature need to be assessed from a different perspective from one exclusively determined by use. Finch and Leapor both recall the complexity of a rural economy in order to question the straightforward connection drawn by the lords of their respective estates between money and tree-cutting, Leapor going on to question the relevance of money as a reliable indicator of an estate's value. Carter argues that nature is the source of human thought and that only nature enables genuine learning to take place. Seward, most radically of all, proposes that nature has being and deserves respect on that basis alone; Mason's lines on the rights of plants are relevant in this context (3: 179-84).

The non-georgic poems discussed here all argue that humans have a

deep responsibility to and for nature, in response to and modification of the georgic belief that nature is meant to be used by humans. But as Dodsley's Agriculture teaches, responsibility to and for nature is a component also of the georgics. It is just that the georgic model, in its focus on use-value, takes responsibility as something of a given, and (then as now) anything assumed but not articulated can be ignored. If it is treated irresponsibly, nature will produce neither bountifully nor perpetually. Effective use, such as the georgics recommend, requires a fundamental sense of responsibility to balance present and future needs of humans and of nature. Augustan ecology is about precisely that fundamental sense of responsibility. These poets wrote as they did because immediate use can gain pre-eminence over long-term responsibility, and Augustan ecology refuses to allow use to usurp the position occupied by responsibility at the heart of human relations with nature.

It is crucial to realize, however, that Augustan ecology is not aware of itself as a discourse in the same way that Romantic ecology is. There is no sense of an environmental movement in the eighteenth century. The georgics have a relatively stable concept of genre to apply to, and they refer to other georgics specifically, but the author of each other poem discussed here (as well as the georgicists, in the most ecological sections of the georgics) has to reinvent Augustan ecology out of nothing in order to articulate environmental concerns. These poets all read other poets' work voraciously (even Mary Leapor, who gained permission to use her employer's library before she could use her patron's), but there was no ecological literary community expressed in that poetry that could provide significant support for the efforts of these poets.

The phrase "Augustan ecology" might therefore seem inappropriate, insofar as it implies a coherence that was not felt by the writers involved. It might further be objected that the phrase imposes a consistent viewpoint on a number of isolated writers largely unaware that other poets held similar views. I feel it has proven both feasible and fruitful to connect these disparate texts, conceived and written mainly in isolation from each other. They share a fundamental concern about the effect of human labour on the natural world, about the fate of nature as it comes under the ever-increasing dominion of humanity, and about the role of literature in articulating the relationship between humanity and nature.

There is a heroism about the efforts of these poets, writing out of different situations but with the same concerns. Late-twentieth-century environmentalism is really a network of interdependent movements barely allied closely enough to support a singular noun, and these eighteenth-century poets share a similar relationship to each other. I use the phrase "Augustan ecology" not to imply a movement where none existed but to honour the intellectual courage of these ecological poets for raising their voices out of silence toward a common goal, independently felt, that continues to provoke our thoughts and fears today.

Epilogue

Augustan Ecology in the Twenty-First Century

The popular environmental debate in North America centres on two issues: catastrophic pollution, like oil spills, and the destruction of wilderness. These are massive and complex issues, certainly, with far-reaching implications for the future of humanity's survival in the world, and they may be the two issues that require resolution if the post-apocalyptic nightmare familiar to us through movies and novels is to remain a fiction. However, the drama of these two issues has overshadowed the far more serious concern of daily and incremental environmental damage. How we live determines the world that we live in; as Richard White has pointed out, "a single lawyer or accountant could, on a good day, put the efforts of Paul Bunyan to shame" (185). The participants in the environmental debate, by ignoring daily life and the impact it has on the natural world, have unknowingly contributed to the ongoing daily degradation of the environment.

The eighteenth century was not yet worried about the loss of wilderness, at least not as obsessively as subsequent ages have been. Paradoxically, it is therefore the eighteenth century's lack of concern with wilderness that offers in the twenty-first century the next best hope to save the world. In Richard White's opinion, the problem is to find room for humanity in nature, and contemporary environmentalists have not come to terms with the long-term implications of the need to find such room:

> Only people whose relation to the land was already alienated could hold up wilderness as a model for human life in nature, for the romantic ideology of wilderness

> leaves precisely nowhere for human beings actually to make their living from the land. (80)

Damage does not have to be cataclysmic to be serious. Long-term low-intensity radiation is as deadly as short-term high-intensity radiation. Just because their consciousness did not have either catastrophic pollution or the destruction of wilderness to focus on, since neither concern was relevant to their time, writers of the eighteenth century were in a position to interrogate the daily interaction of humans and nature. They recognize that humans either "make their living from the land," or do not live at all.

The contemporary environmental debate has become locked in a death spiral. Pro-industry groups fear an end to industry if they compromise; environmental groups fear an end to the environment if they compromise. The principle that fuels these warring paranoias is the same one behind Romantic ecology: the land can sustain only one use at a time. Either it is developed, and therefore useful/dead, or it is natural, and therefore vital/worthless. No compromise is possible so long as these are considered opposing sides of an irreducible dualism. In western North America the battle has coalesced around a concept called "Wise Use"; environmental groups justifiably distrust this industry-sponsored astroturf movement,[1] but there seems no other option. If the environmental groups do not address the possibility of compromise, if they do not assume ownership of the relation between nature and human labour, then the negotiated settlement that must come will follow the terms set by industry. A chance to preserve the environment in the long term will have been lost.

Human life is by definition lived in nature. Augustan ecology, though acknowledging the distinctions between humans and other species, is deeply

concerned about human life in nature, about how both sides of the equation can be sustained. The answer of Augustan ecological poets is deceptively simple: nature in all its forms needs to be treated with respect, or both humanity and nature will suffer degradation and eventually destruction. We live in nature, even when it doesn't look like it; if we think that nature is only where we are not then we will destroy nature through disrespect, and destroy ourselves metaphysically before destroying ourselves as part of nature. These poets would have agreed I think with William Cronon, with whose words I conclude this dissertation:

> The tree in the garden is in reality no less other, no less worthy of our wonder and respect, than the tree in an ancient forest that has never known an ax or saw.
> ("Trouble" 88)

Notes

Introduction

[1] The epigraph comes from volume 5, page 391 of Anna Seward's Letters (Edinburgh, 1811).

[2] A problem with "ecological" is that it has been vulgarized into a prefix, "eco-," that can be (and has been) put in front of a disturbingly wide range of other terms: U.S. Vice-President Al Gore has been called an "ecopolitician"; the tourist industry's emphasis on formerly inaccessible (and therefore until recently pristine) locations is called "ecotourism"; and companies hawking products as diverse as furniture, cleaning products, and banking claim to be "ecologically friendly."

[3] Diane McColley and Tom Keymer are the authors of the only two articles I have found who attempt an ecological reading of literature from before the Romantics.

[4] See John Passmore's Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions and Eric Jones's article "The History of Natural Resource Exploitation in the Western World" in Research in Economic History, Supplement 6 (1991): 235-52. Jones sets out a number of examples of both Western and non-western resource exploitation, including species extinctions and the hypothesized Pleistocene overkill, and argues against Christianity's being singled out and blamed for exploiting nature.

[5] Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier discuss in great detail the relation between nationalism and the environment in the two essays

comprising their book Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience. German environmental organizations, heavily influenced by the nature-mysticism of German Romanticism, were among the National Socialist party's strongest supporters. According to Staudenmaier, "by 1939, fully 60 percent of these conservationists had joined the NSDAP (compared to about 10 percent of adult men and 25 percent of teachers and lawyers)" (17). The Nazi party's specifically local version of fascism, which emphasized respect for place, could accommodate those environmentalists whose impulse toward activism was in some measure either Romantic or neoromantic. Janet Biehl argues that "nature-mysticism" or "a mystical reverence for the natural world" is essential to contemporary neofascist organizations (32), in Germany as well as throughout the West: "'Ecological' fascism is a cynical but potentially politically effective attempt to mystically link genuine concern for present-day environmental problems with time-honored fears of the 'outsider' or the 'new'" (65-66).

6 The publishing history of Uncommon Ground is instructive about the volatility of environmental debate in the late twentieth century. When it first appeared in 1995, in hardcover, it bore the subtitle Toward Reinventing Nature. Negative critical reaction, not to the book but to the very idea of "reinventing nature," led the editor and publisher to come up with a new subtitle for the 1996 paperback edition: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature. The climate is such that even the word "nature" finds passionate defenders who seek to protect it from change, whether or not that change appears to be for the worse.

Chapter One

1 Strangely, because he has written the only recent article on Silva, Douglas Chambers never once mentions Silva in his recent study The Reinvention of the World: English Writing 1650-1750, though he mentions Evelyn more than twenty times.

2 Unless otherwise specified, quotations from Evelyn's Silva are from the fifth edition, of 1729.

3 For information on trees and their associations with British historical events and figures, see Jacob Strutt's Sylva Britannica (London, 1830).

4 There is however a very real possibility that this occurrence of "Driads" is simply a typo for "Druids." If this is the case, Evelyn's spirituality would be more explicitly nationalistic than I have argued here, but not less spiritual.

5 The fifth edition of Silva (1729) numbers the end of Book III thus: 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 277, 278, 279. Book IV begins on page 280, and the numbering continues uninterrupted thereafter. As a result, when I quote from these pages, I add the suffix "a" when I refer to the page with the first occurrence of a given page number; I add "b" when I refer to the second version of that page number.

6 The book referred to is John Smith's England's Improvement Reviv'd: In a Treatise of All Manner of Husbandry and Trade by Land and Sea (London, 1673), published with a dedication to the President of the Royal

Society (and a 180-word subtitle). It also includes a commendatory note from Evelyn, stating "I have my self been engaged in the same argument" [ii]. Smith's book, much revised by the bookseller Benjamin Southwood, is filled with large numbers but reads slightly more clearly than does Evelyn's.

7 Seventeenth-century monetary values are difficult to convert reliably into twentieth-century values, but obviously Evelyn predicts that great sums of money will accrue to those landowners who adopt his silvicultural recommendations.

Chapter Two

1 I owe much of my thinking on Milton to Diane Kelsey McColley, whose article "Beneficent Hierarchies: Reading Milton Greenly" gave me considerable guidance. I also owe a debt to McColley and Valerie Johnson, whose papers on Milton (and subsequent conversation) at the 1998 North American Interdisciplinary Conference on Environment and Community provided inspiration as well as advice.

2 "Ariconium" is Philips's term for Herefordshire, like John Dyer's term "Siluria" used in his later georgic, The Fleece, to describe an area along the Welsh border.

3 Oddly, Chalker misattributes these lines, silently modernizing their spelling and accidentals and citing them as lines 425-32 rather than 425-36; he refers in his bibliography to two editions of the poem that both differ from his version of the lines.

4 England, as Peter Marren discusses in his excellent book Britain's

Ancient Woodland, is thickly populated with species of plants and animals that require local environmental disturbance of varying degrees. Certain butterflies, for example, can exist only in environments similar to coppice-woods. Britain's wide variety of biological species that depend upon disturbance suggests that large-scale land use in the British Isles has gone on for much longer than has yet been determined.

5 My thanks to Pippa Brush's father for this piece of information. Isobel Grundy has since told me of stories current in cider-growing country that sometimes mice fell into the machinery and were pressed into cider.

6 Gay's satiric eclogue "The Birth of the Squire" includes a scene of drunkenness, in which the master triumphs over and tyrannizes his poorer neighbours and his labourers, and Thomson's Seasons includes a passage in which the drunken stupidity of the men mirrors the sinful and mistaken practice of hunting ("Autumn" 501-69, especially 530-69), but the harvest-home set-piece rarely includes such specific advice as Philips gives.

Chapter Three

1 I first encountered the comment used as the epigraph to this chapter on page 173 of Marie Loretto Lilly's 1919 The Georgic, a foundational early work that critics of the English georgic do not refer to with nearly enough frequency.

A version of the Pope section of this chapter has been accepted for publication in the 1998 volume of Lumen, the journal of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Also, a version of the section on Dodsley was presented as a conference paper at the October 1997 meeting of

the North-West Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (Eugene, Oregon).

[2] I find it difficult to understand why these critics, whose careers are so completely bound up with the texts toward which they are so disparaging, decided to work on these georgics at all. Tierney was interested primarily in editing Dodsley's letters, so Agriculture was peripheral to his project, but both Chalker and Lloyd Thomas devoted a large amount of time to texts which seem to have been thoroughly distasteful to them.

[3] I gratefully acknowledge my debt to Jeannine Green of the University of Alberta's Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, who managed to procure for me from Duke University a photocopy of their 1732 copy of Anne Irwin's Castle-Howard.

[4] Dodsley's poem Public Virtue was to have been published as three separate volumes, but only the first book of the poem, Agriculture, ever appeared. There is no consensus about which title to choose, but I refer to it as Agriculture in order to emphasize the self-contained nature of the volume.

[5] The genre term "silva" is thoroughly discussed by Robert Cummings, who notes two reasons for using the word for "forest" as the name of a genre. First, "as we call a forest an unbounded plenty of trees growing up without order, so the ancients called 'forests,' their books in which works of diverse character were gathered together as if by chance" (Aulus Gellius, qtd. in Cummings 65). And second, a poet would first write a rough draft containing much disparate material, and "this version—on account of the rudimentariness of the work—they would call a silva, because there was so much in it that was rough and ill-shaped, wanting cutting off

and removal" (Quintilian, qtd. in Cummings 65). The nominal subject of Pope's poem, the forest at Windsor, therefore goes some way toward authorizing Cummings's generic interpretation. In addition, Cummings notes that Statius's Thebaid was the primary source for the silva, and both the above quotations (from Aulus Gellius and Quintilian) appear in Johannes Veenhusen's edition of Statius, which Pope owned.

6 The date of Thomas Cooke's translation of Hesiod, 1728, is the only reason that leads me to speculate that Irwin's 1732 praise of the person "Who has so well performed his Works and Days" (86) might refer to Thomas Cooke. I can find no echoes of Cooke's Hesiod in Castle-Howard. Cooke's translation is dedicated to the Duke of Argyll, who is like Carlisle a strong Whig, and his preface praises the Marchioness of Annandale, but he makes no reference in the preface to Lady Irwin or her family.

7 It should be noted that during the building of Castle Howard by Vanbrugh Carlisle had shifted a village to improve the park.

8 I do however wonder if "cheapest" might be a compositor's error for "chiefest," an error which might derive either from misreading a handwritten manuscript, or from the poem's being read aloud in the shop (an infrequent practice in the early eighteenth century). The poem seems otherwise to be quite clean, but it is a most unexpected word.

9 My thanks to Isobel Grundy for this comment.

10 See book VIII of Ovid's Metamorphoses. The story of Erysichthon also appears in Witness to Wilderness: The Clayoquot Sound Anthology, adapted from Arthur Golding's 1567 translation by Phyllis Reeve, one of the

volume's editors.

11 For an example see Witness to Wilderness: The Clayoquot Sound Anthology (ed. Howard Breen-Needham, et al.). Local protest writings appear in newspapers and magazines, and increasingly on the Internet as well, but there is evidence of a growing commercial market for such work. The summer of 1993 saw 859 people arrested for blockading a logging road near Clayoquot Sound, British Columbia (Duncan et al. 1). The size of the protest, and the daily persistence of the logging companies in seeking to go through the blockades, the RCMP in carrying passively resisting arrestees from the road, and the courts for processing the accused indicates that this is a site of conflict crucial to the lives of many people, and to the structures of society.

Chapter Four

1 A very early version of this chapter was presented in October 1993 as a conference paper at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, at "Culture/ Counter-Cultures: A Graduate Student Conference on the Eighteenth Century." My thanks to Barbara Seeber, Felicity Nussbaum, and Fred Lock for their questions and conversation at that time.

2 The complete Seasons first appeared in 1730, and went through "considerably more than three hundred separate editions in the hundred years from 1750-1850" (Chalker 90). All quotations here, unless otherwise noted, are from J. Logie Robertson's 1908 Oxford Standard Authors Series variorum edition, based on the 1746 version.

3 Though both D.W. Jefferson in his 1978 "The Place of James

Thomson" and John Barrell in his 1983 An Equal, Wide, Survey discuss the progress versus primitivism paradox, neither mentions Chalker's 1963 resolution of the apparent paradox as a feature basic to both Thomson's georgic and Virgil's Georgics.

4 Finch's "Something, too high for Syllables to speak" ("Nocturnal Reverie" 42) is clearly related to the famous conclusion of Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality" ode:

> To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears. (205-06)

Wordsworth's poem is often credited with initiating (or at least indicating) a paradigm shift in attitudes toward nature. The similarity between Finch's and Wordsworth's lines is enough to call the originality of Romantic ecology into some question; see Chapter 6, below, for further discussion of Anne Finch's poetry.

5 The issue of vegetarianism is beyond the scope of this project, and merits its own dissertation. However, it is interesting to notice that Thomson's distaste for eating the animals with whom a person works is reflected in many cultures, both European and non-European; see John Berger's "Why Look at Animals?" The topic is much discussed in anthropological studies; see David Abram's The Spell of the Sensuous for a brief discussion and helpful references.

6 Paradoxically, Crusoe's possible objection to eating animals may invalidate his defense of cannibalism. If it is a crime to kill an ox, as Thomson implies in The Seasons, it is therefore a crime to kill and eat a human being; it may not be worse to kill a person than to kill a cow, but it is

criminal just the same. Defoe is writing of cultural belief rather than crime, of course, but he recognizes the gap just the same: he is on shaky ground, objecting to his own culture's practice of meat-eating while trying to defend another culture's cannibalism.

7 See Carol Adams's The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory and Timothy Morton's Shelley and the Revolution in Taste for discussions of vegetarianism in Frankenstein.

8 John Barrell in The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place quotes 1845 visitor Hugh Miller to note that earlier readers of the description of Hagley Park who knew the actual prospect found no difficulty in the passage's enumerative style. Faced with the Hagley Park prospect, Miller comments that "description, even in the hands of a master, sinks into mere enumeration" (qtd. in Barrell 15). The actual landscape excuses Thomson from what Miller had understood as poetic failings, and changes Miller's critical process.

9 This line read "Philips, facetious bard!" rather than "Philips, Pomona's bard!" in versions of "Autumn" between 1730 and 1738. I would speculate that as his poem continued to grow in length, Thomson began to appreciate the detail and sensitivity of Philips's descriptions, and read against the humorous potential of his mock-heroic, but this can be only speculation.

Chapter Five

1 John Dixon Hunt uses the idea of the genius as the title of the anthology of poetry and prose on gardens he co-edited with Peter Willis, The

Genius of the Place: The English Landscape Garden, 1620-1820.

[2] My position reveals itself here; it is of course possible to argue that anglicizing Italy is culturally a very significant action, but this is not my interest here.

[3] Mason pretends to encourage bringing livestock into the garden, especially onto the lawn, but he uses them moralistically to demonstrate the fallen nature of the world. At the end of the episode, his livestock begins to eat the trees and vegetation, and he then explains just how UNnatural the garden must be kept, even though it looks natural. See note 10 below.

[4] Prominent environmental activist Paul Watson has advocated tree-spiking for years in the conflict over logging old-growth forests in British Columbia, Alaska, and the American Pacific Northwest. When a logger's chainsaw or a bandsaw in a mill contacts a spike, not only will the saw's blade be damaged, but the spike (and occasionally the teeth of the blade) will in theory shatter in a shrapnel pattern like that of a small fragmentation grenade.

[5] See Carol Adams's The Sexual Politics of Meat for a brief discussion of the relation between Wollstonecraft's original and the parodic Vindication of the Rights of Brutes (106, 169-70).

[6] See Luc Ferry's The New Ecological Order for an extended and detailed discussion of nature's legal standing. Ferry's understanding is that because in Euro-American jurisprudence "rights" adhere to a subject able to speak on his or her own behalf, then nature can have no legal standing. The liminal case of persons unable to speak on their own behalf, such as young

children or persons with serious mental dysfunctions, similarly does not apply, because there is no way to assess nature's competence (again from the same concept of rights), to determine whether nature "needs" protecting in the same way that children do.

7 "Do forests think? Forest are thought," writes Peter Levitt, who sees old-growth trees as "the great-great-great-great-great-grandmothers/ grandfathers of the world" (79).

8 Earlier chapters of this dissertation have noted the seriousness with which poets have addressed the issue of cutting trees, particularly oaks, and the final chapter confronts directly the place of cutting trees in Augustan poetry. Margaret Cavendish's "A Dialogue between an Oake, and a Man cutting him downe" emphasizes the uneasiness felt when personified nature is still considered as a resource. TV commercials in the late twentieth century exemplify the consumption of personified nature, as in the popular California Raisins ads in the late 1980s, in which dancing and singing raisins asked to be eaten (and spawned an entire line of anthropomorphic merchandising, including dolls).

9 Of course Seward and Plumwood mean rather different things. Plumwood's phrase "the logic of domination" includes a broad cultural scheme of domination, combining domination of species other than humans, with that of genders other than male, and of races other than Caucasian, and ethnic backgrounds other than Euro-American; Seward refers far more specifically to the progressive domination of nature and the landscape by the wealthy and powerful. For a good analysis of Plumwood's ideas, see the essays in the special issue on ecological feminism of Hypatia: A Journal of

Feminist Philosophy (6.1 [1991]), including Plumwood's own "Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism." See also Plumwood's Feminism and the Mastery of Nature.

[10] Interestingly, Mason approves of fencing trees from animals because deer and cattle will strip the bark from young trees and kill them, whereas here the fence is the final proof of Fashion's claim that the Genius has failed his land. The animals fenced out in "The Lake," as Isobel Grundy suggested to me, might be considered resistance agents of the Genius.

[11] Seward's letters on Thomson appear in vol. 5: 29-33 and 80-105, to Thomas Park from December 1797 to May 1798.

[12] James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis holds that the earth is capable of self-regulation. If humanity shifts the environment too far, the earth will compensate in such a way as to heal the damage that has been done; this has been extended on occasion to imply that the earth may have to destroy humanity, but it has also been criticized for letting polluters off too easily from their responsibility to clean up their own mess.

Chapter Six

[1] A version of this chapter has been accepted for publication in the 1998 volume of Lumen, the journal of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (CSECS). Portions of this chapter have also been presented as conference papers at the October 1996 meeting of CSECS (Victoria, British Columbia), and the February 1998 North American Interdisciplinary Conference on Environment and Community (Reno, Nevada).

[2] I need to thank Nancy Pekter for helping me to articulate my response to this section of the poem.

[3] The defense of old-growth trees, like the defense of such creatures as grizzly bears and pandas, has found much more widespread public support than the preservation of, say, lichen ecosystems. Support for conservation softened in the mid-1990s with an increasing awareness that endangered species lists were overpopulated by so-called "glamour species." Whether the problem of "glamour species" justifies withdrawing support for conservation is not my point here (although it doesn't); I mean only to point out that the eighteenth-century hierarchy of species and ecosystems still holds in our supposedly non-hierarchical age.

[4] Carter's poem appeared in the 1755 edition of Dodsley's Collection of Poems by Several Hands as "To a Gentleman, On his intending to cut down a Grove to enlarge his Prospect." Seven years later, in Carter's 1762 collected works, it appeared as "To ----------. On his Design of Cutting Down a Shady Walk." The shift in meanings between the cutting of "a Grove" to that of "a Shady Walk" enforces a rather dramatic change in the reading of the poem, even though the poem itself changed very little between the two publication dates except in such accidentals as italicization and capitalization. I follow here the text given in Carter's 1825 biography and collected works "To Dr. Walwyn, 1745, On his Design of Cutting Down a Shady Walk."

[5] The science of ecology is much appealed to by environmental groups in the late twentieth century, but it has been faulted for exactly the difficulties experienced by Carter in criticizing this gentleman. Ecology, argues Neil

Evernden, is far too ready to accept objectivist terms of debate, too ready "to address the developer's perpetual question: 'What good is it?' Accepting the validity of that question entails denying the validity of the preservationist movement" ("Beyond Ecology" 92). Carter, like Evernden's ecologist, remains inside the zero-sum game of the developer; a reason must be found, a use for the trees defended from cutting. In such a formulation, the trees lose their identity in usefulness.

6 See 1: 172 and 1: 253 for other mentions of "Hamadryad" in this volume of the letters between Carter and Talbot. The first mention is only a description of walking in the woods as a visit with "Oreades and Hamadryads," but the other is more interesting. Carter's poem "Ode to Wisdom," which features an owl, had been included by Richardson in Clarissa without her knowledge, and had also appeared without her approval in some of the journals, and Talbot mentions its finally appearing in an authorized form: "your incomparable owl is fixed at last under the protection of your Hamadryad in Mr. Dodsley's laurel-grove," Dodsley's Collection of Poems by Several Hands.

7 See 1: 222 and 1: 230-31 on the Talbots' gardener, including Catherine Talbot's complaints that she could not make anyone listen to her whom she was supposed to govern: her dog, her horse, or her gardener.

8 Carter's support of trees eventually became material, as her nephew, heir and biographer Montagu Pennington recalled:

> About thirty-five years before she died, Mrs. Carter had planted in a little court before her house, an acorn, which produced a tree now large and flourishing, and

> of which she used to say with great pleasure, that it was the most eastern oak in her Majesty's dominions. . . .
>
> The author trusts that it is almost needless to add, that no considerations should tempt him to neglect or destroy that tree. (1: 138-39, note)

9 Roger's profession is not specified, but he has more in common with the "fierce Crew" who wait in the kitchen for a drink at lunch than with "surly Gruffo" (129), the butler who grudgingly and disdainfully serves them.

10 I mean to imply no essentialist connection here between working on and caring for the land; there can be some practical connection, but that does not imply that any sort of responsible stewardship over time follows necessarily from the connection. In this poem it happens to, or at least that is part of Leapor's argument, but it is not a generalizable statement.

11 Richard Greene has argued that Crumble Hall is based on Richard Chauncy's Edgcote House, where Leapor worked in the mid-1740s; the house she knew was torn down and rebuilt between 1747 and 1752 (16). Leapor died in 1748, so she would have seen only the destruction, not the rebuilding. In addition, Richard Chauncy's son, after inheriting the estate and the reconstructed house, "caused the village of Edgcote with its eighteen families to be removed from his prospect" (Greene 16). Leapor's defense of the grove and the labourers was prescient, but ineffectual.

Conclusion

1 See Seward's 1780 Monody on Major André, which includes letters

written in 1769 from John André that praise her "resentment against the Canonical Dons, who stumpify the heads of these good green people" (34). See also Seward's letters of October 3, 1801, to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield (5: 389-91), and of December 20, 1801, to Lady Eleanor Butler (5: 425-29).

Epilogue

1 An "astroturf" movement is one intended to look like a grassroots movement but that is sponsored and run by some person or organization who stands to gain from the movement's actions. In British Columbia a group called the Forest Alliance is sponsored by the province's major forest companies as well by the IWA, the International Woodworkers of America union; its claims of nonpartisanship are somewhat suspect.

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